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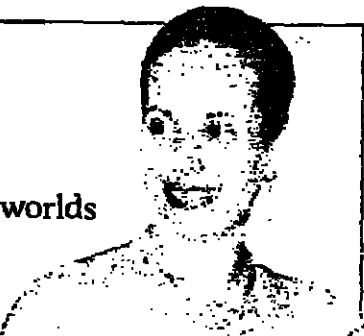
Daniel Farson on Bram Stoker's family secrets

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BEST FOR BOOKS

John Gribbin on other worlds
PLUS: Evita: the books and The Secrets of the Vatican PAGES 32, 33



BOY STORY

GEOFF BROWN'S VERDICT ON SLEEPERS PAGE 29



BEST FOR JOBS

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REPORTING BY JANIS P. DE SO

Israeli officer overpowers gunman who injured six Arabs in burst of automatic fire

Market place shooting fails to halt talks

FROM ROSS DUNN IN HEBRON, WEST BANK

TALKS on the future of Hebron reopened last night despite an attack by an Israeli soldier in which he wounded six Arabs in an attempted New Year's Day massacre. He had wanted to stop the town's transfer to Palestinian self rule.

The shooting in Hebron's open air Arab market came as Israeli troops were preparing to withdraw from four-fifths of the town.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority President, were quick to denounce the shooting. Talks between Mr Netanyahu and Mr Arafat had been expected to take place before the shooting, but Dennis Ross, the American mediator, said that they would take place "no later than Thursday". Israeli-Palestinian talks resumed at the level of officials last night.

The Israeli security forces responded to the incident by clamping a curfew on most parts of Hebron. They quickly arrested Noam Friedman, 19, a soldier, who raked Palestinian shopkeepers and their customers with gunfire from his M16 assault rifle.

The gunman shouted "Abraham bought the Cave of the Patriarchs for 400 shekels of silver — no one will return it" as he was put into a police van after the attack. The Cave of the Patriarchs is the burial place of Abraham and Sarah which is sacred to Muslims and Jews. The young soldier also told the police last night

that he had a history of mental problems.

Israeli military officials were quick to point out that the soldier was not stationed in Hebron but was from Ma'ale Adumim, a Jewish settlement near Jerusalem.

The hero of the day was an Israeli army officer, Lieutenant Avi Buskila, who disarmed the would-be killer. Friedman was trying to reload his weapon when he was knocked down by Lieutenant Buskila, who said that he saw the man open fire and then try to run into the market. "I started running also and knocked him to the ground," he said. "It all took only about ten seconds."

During his interrogation by the police yesterday, Friedman repeated the slogan of Jewish settlers: "Hebron was and always will be."

Mr Netanyahu expressed "shock and revulsion" at the incident and promised that it would not stop the peace talks with the Palestinians. "We are committed to the speedy resolution of this agreement, properly concluded, and no crime will stand in our way of doing so," he said.

He added that now it was even more urgent that the Hebron accord should be completed. "The agreement we have been labouring on for months has been designed to prevent precisely such acts of violence," he said. "I have said repeatedly that undue delay in its conclusion and its implementation creates a twilight period of uncertainty and in-

stability that could induce the kind of attacks that we have seen today."

For his part, Mr Arafat called on the Israelis to "put an end to such acts and help protect the peace process". The Palestinian group Hamas said it would exact revenge.

A White House statement said that President Clinton was outraged and saddened by the shootings. The President spoke to Mr Arafat by telephone, but not to Mr Netanyahu. "The President condemns this cowardly act, which was clearly designed to make it more difficult to conclude an agreement on Israeli deployment from Hebron," the statement said.

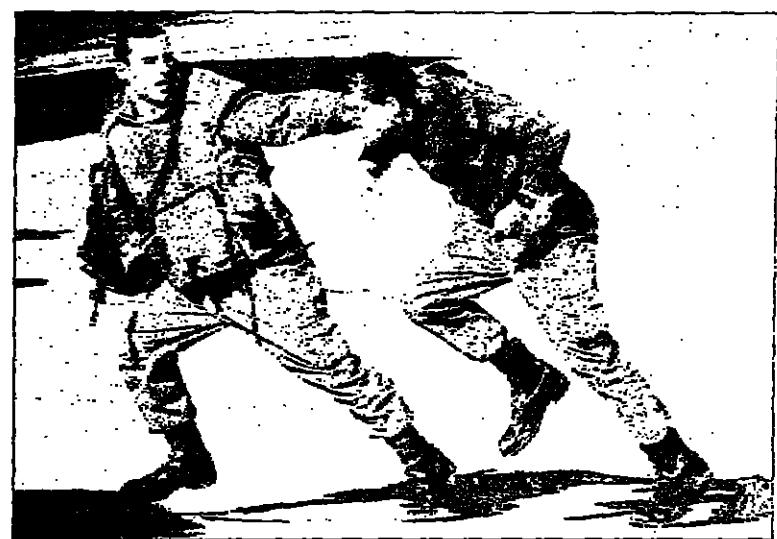
The gunman received no support for his action from Noam Arnon, the spokesman for the Hebron settlers, who said: "What happened here today is a terrible thing. We reject and oppose it. This is not our way and we call upon everybody not to do such things and not to do any damage or any harm to any human beings."

Saeed Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, was not satisfied. He said that the 400 Jewish settlers who live and study in Hebron were "a time bomb which will explode in the faces of those who want peace". The attack showed "that our insistence on addressing the concerns of the (120,000) Palestinians rather than the settlers is justified".

Hebron mood, page 13
Leading article, page 17



Israeli Noam Friedman, 19, fires into Hebron's open air market. Below Lt Avi Buskila leaps on him as he tries to reload and drags him away



Zimbabwe's first cricket series win

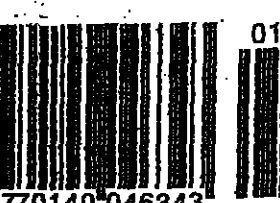
Zimbabwe beat England by five runs in Harare, giving them a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series after their earlier victory in Bulawayo. Beating drums and a packed house greeted their first win in a cricket international series as England, needing 41 from six overs, lost a race against overs left. Page 21

Chelsea thwart Liverpool

Liverpool failed to consolidate their leadership of the FA Carling Premiership when they were beaten 1-0 by Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. Roberto di Matteo, the Italy international, scored the winning goal. Second-placed Arsenal closed the gap with a 2-0 home victory over Middlesbrough. Pages 22, 23

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Jobs for the girls in Blair line-up after the election

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE changing face of new Labour has been highlighted by a comprehensive analysis predicting that one in four Labour MPs after the next election will be women.

If Tony Blair wins office he will be supported by a Parliamentary Labour Party that is also dominated by MPs who are former councillors, journalists and party officials. By contrast, fewer Labour MPs coming into Parliament will have a background in the trade unions but many more will be privately educated.

The findings emerge from a study of candidates in Labour's 394 most winnable seats in the country. It presents the most detailed picture — two thirds more than a partial survey last

summer — of what Labour would look like in government. In total, 91 of the candidates in the winnable seats are women, which would more than double the current number of 38 women Labour MPs. This would contrast strongly with the Tory backbenches, which are likely to see their 17 women MPs depleted in the election.

A 394-seat haul, giving Tony Blair a Commons majority of 129, is much higher than even the most optimistic party strategists expect. But the women candidates are spread evenly across the range of safe and slightly less safe seats. So if Mr Blair secured only 350 seats, with a Commons majority of just 41, the proportion of women on the Labour

backbenches would remain broadly the same. The Labour ranks after the next election will also be fitter to govern than before. The study showed that sport is the candidates' favourite pastime, with some 150 claiming to take regular exercise. By far the most popular recreation is football, with 60 saying they liked playing and watching it.

The study — seen by The Times — was carried out by DPR Publishing Ltd, a London-based firm, which used new computer software to analyse the results of brief questionnaires completed by each candidate. The New Labour Guide is to be published on five computer disks shortly. Of the 394 candidates in

£12m cold weather payments

BY ADRIAN LEE

ONE million more cold weather payments to elderly and needy people will be triggered by the end of the week, the Department of Social Security announced yesterday.

The freeze has claimed six lives in Britain and is forecast to last at least four more days, with temperatures expected to fall to -10C (14F) in central areas of England last night. The department said the new payment of £9.50 per household would bring this winter's total to more than £12 million. Areas qualifying for the first time over the new year included most of the Home Counties, Warwickshire, Newcastle, North Yorkshire, South West, Scotland, Essex, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Derby-



shire. By the end of the week it is expected that most of Britain will qualify.

The payments are triggered by seven consecutive days of temperatures averaging zero or below and are for people on income support, including families with young children, pensioners and the disabled.

Pond death, page 3
Dr Sutcliffe, page 14
Photograph, page 20

Broken neck put woman in danger of dying for 45 years

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT



Joy Connor at home

A WOMAN who discovered that her neck had been broken for 45 years has been told by doctors that a sudden jolt could have killed her at any time.

Joy Connor, 56, hopes to have an operation this month to repair the break, which happened when she was 11 and fell from a hay barn. Doctors were astonished when an X-ray revealed the damage to the odontoid peg that supports her skull. The slightest bump could have resulted in paralysis or death.

Mrs Connor, who has had three children, run a market stall and helped

build a house in the intervening years, suffered frequent pain in her head and neck, but doctors dismissed her complaints. Then, last year, she tripped and fell, triggering new pains. Her doctor ordered an X-ray, and that brought the problem to light. Now surgeons at Derby Royal Infirmary plan to graft bone from her hip to repair the damage.

Mrs Connor, of Chaddesden, Derby, said: "All my life I have never thought twice about lifting things or getting out and about. I always knew there was something wrong, and at last I have been proved right. I am lucky to be alive."

She said that she had had bad headaches when she was young and had

refused to go to school. "But no one believed me and I would get a good belt round the head for making things up. Once I passed out on the roundabouts at a local fair. Doctors said it was period pains, and later they said it was stress from bringing up children. One doctor even tried to give me Valium for it. I got so fed up I just stopped mentioning it."

Alan Crookard, a consultant neurosurgeon at the National Hospitals for Neurology and Neurosurgery, London, said several hundred people a year suffered similar injuries to their necks, often in car accidents, but he had never heard of such an injury remaining undiagnosed for so long.

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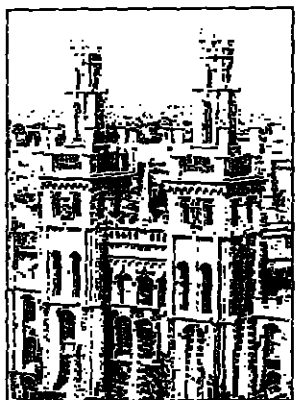
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Oxbridge alumni hope gifts will secure places for children



All Souls: places used to be reserved

BY JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

OXBRIDGE colleges are coming under increasing pressure to admit the children of former students, some of whom expect a university place for their offspring in return for much-needed donations.

Financial difficulties have forced the colleges to step up fundraising efforts in recent years, with direct-mail and telephone approaches to alumni. But the process has brought to the surface growing resentment among donors whose children are rejected.

Entry to both the ancient universities has become increasingly competitive, squeezing out families

which have sent generations of children to the same college. Two-thirds of entrants have the maximum A-level score and the proportion of students from independent schools has fallen.

As the colleges prepared to interview this year's candidates, admissions tutors insisted that there was no question of places being "sold". But some admitted that disgruntled alumni were applying pressure to secure preferential treatment for their children.

Michael Beloff, the President of Trinity College, Oxford, since last August, said he had already encountered old members who "complain that there is no guaranteed place for their offspring". But selection on

other than purely academic grounds would endanger Oxford's international reputation.

Susan Stobbs, who chairs Cambridge's admissions forum, said the university had drawn up new guidelines for admissions tutors to ensure that competition was fair and open. Colleges were pleased to admit students with familiar names, but only on merit.

Ms Stobbs said: "I have a feeling that there is probably more open discussion in colleges about issues to do with admissions because they are all running huge development campaigns. Suddenly they have been having a lot more contact with alumni and they have been getting some letters from people saying they

are not giving money because their son hasn't got in."

The issue came to a head at Cambridge when minutes of a meeting of admissions tutors at Pembroke College included a proposal for parental links to be taken into account if candidates could not be separated academically. Dr Stephen Monsell, who wrote the minutes, said such an approach "in fact reflected our existing, but informal, bias, though we do not advertise it".

Although the meeting had no power to make policy and rejected a further proposal to check applicants' names against lists of former members, the discussion aroused fears that donors might exert improper influence in the selection

process. Forty-three of the 68 Oxbridge colleges now have full-time development officers.

Henry Drucker, who headed Oxford's fundraising campaign, said: "People do raise the question of their children when they discuss a donation, but I was always able to tell them it was out of my hands because we never knew how the colleges made up their minds. It must be very tempting when it is the college trying to raise money, but I have no evidence of anyone succumbing."

In many American universities, Mr Drucker added, there was said to be a "president's list" of about a dozen places which could be allocated to children of major donors. At

Oxford and Cambridge, however, it would not be easy for the head of a college to guarantee a place because selection was in the hands of the academics, who wanted the best.

Mr Drucker said some major donors to Oxford had seen their children's applications rejected subsequently. "They did not withdraw their gifts and they could not accuse us of breaking our word, but they clearly felt let down."

In earlier times, neither of the ancient universities hesitated to reserve places for donors' families. At Oxford, All Souls regularly reserved for "Founder's Kin", and Eton had a dozen scholarships to King's College each year because both were founded by Henry VI.

Labour's women want to bring in Commons sense

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

TESS KINGHAM, a young working mother with a media job, is typical of the new female Labour candidate.

The 33-year-old has been an active party member since 1982 but decided to stand for Parliament so that she can join a growing band of women MPs keen to change male-dominated Westminster.

Mrs Kingham and many of her fellow women candidates tend to identify themselves with Tony Blair's new Labour, in marked contrast to some of the older male MPs who make up much of the opposition backbenches.

While they will undoubtedly make a priority of "female" issues such as education and health, few have grand visions of political change. They instead want a woman's perspective to be brought to bear on Parliament and government in general, together with a more commonsense and consensual approach to politics.

Mrs Kingham has the heavy burden of trying to overturn a Tory majority of

6,069 in Gloucester. The seat is known as Labour's Bastion because, if it falls on election night, Labour will have effectively secured a Commons majority of one.

Mrs Kingham, who has an 18-month-old daughter, Rosa, with her husband Mark, was selected for the seat in September 1995 without the aid of a women-only shortlist. She has worked as a press and media adviser for several overseas charities for the past twelve years and is currently working for War on Want.

She had to think long and hard about the impact her candidacy would have on her family. "Parliament is very much geared to men with other jobs who do their politicking in the evening," she said. "It is not geared to anybody who has any kind of a family life."

She said that women have a better understanding of what people care about, especially on education and the health service. "Women are more aware of the concerns of the people simply because we

have families. We are the ones who take children to school, take them to the doctors. That means we have more of a grip on reality."

Melanie Johnson, 41, who is standing in Welwyn & Hatfield, has been an Ofsted schools inspector for the past four years after being an NHS manager. She is also a magistrate. She was selected by a women-only shortlist in March 1995 before the policy was banned and has a good chance of wiping out the 8,468 majority of the sitting Conservative MP, David Evans.

A classics and philosophy graduate of University College London, and Cambridge, Miss Johnson joined the Labour Party in 1978. She stood as a candidate for Cambridge in the 1994 Euro elections, and has been a Cambridgeshire county councillor for 16 years.

Miss Johnson, who has three children with William, her partner of 18 years, said that the more women in Parliament, the better. "A more mixed environment will have a civilising effect."



Melanie Johnson, left, is standing in Welwyn & Hatfield while Tess Kingham is hoping to take Gloucester

Although she said women would of course have different opinions, there would be a common approach. "There would be a different style of working, more geared to results than noise-making. Women would be more likely to use common sense and try and build a consensus."

Jacqui Smith, 34, was selected from a women-only shortlist in May 1995 as Labour's candidate for the new seat of Redditch in the West Midlands. With a national Tory majority of 3,287, the seat is a key winnable target for Labour.

Married to Richard, a civil engineer, and with a three-year-old son, James, Mrs

Smith studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University after attending a comprehensive school in Malvern.

After a short stint working as a researcher for the Labour MP Terry Davis, she became a teacher and is at present head of economics and business studies at Haybridge



Blunkett to scrap first test result tables

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR plans to abandon national performance tables of test results for 11-year-olds, and to highlight the issue at the general election.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, is preparing to announce that a Labour government would scrap the system under which the results of 14,500 primary schools in England are to be published nationally. The first results, due in March, are likely to come close to, or even during, a general election campaign and Mr Blunkett is expected to denounce the scheme as a waste of taxpayers' money. Instead, Labour plans to publish results locally for English, mathematics and science, claiming that national tables serve no useful purpose to parents.

Signs that Labour is preparing to shift its stance caused a dispute between Mr Blunkett and Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, over the scheme's worth. Mrs Shephard sees the latest set of league tables as a valuable weapon in improving standards in primary schools. She believes that the Tories could benefit politically from the two parties' difference in strategy.

Mr Blunkett said yesterday that he thought the £2 million cost of implementing the tables could be put to better use in improving schools. "I am interested in improving the standard of education in the neighbourhood schools to which 98 per cent of children go. We would need to be persuaded by parents that information on how other schools many miles away are doing would be of value to them — or that the cost could not be better spent helping their school in a more direct way."

Mrs Shephard said that the tables would show which education authorities had the best record. "Just as other publicly funded services have to be accountable, so should schools."

She said that Labour "has recently tried to mask the appalling record of Labour education authorities by muzzling support for standards in schools. But once again, David Blunkett has let the cat out of the bag, making it clear Labour would deny parents wider information about primary school performance."

Labour has said it would retain secondary school tables, which have been published for five years, but — like the Government — aims to add more information about the "value added" by schools to children's performance. For 11-year-olds, Labour is committed to telling parents about only their own children's performance in English, mathematics and science.

Links with trades unions cut in list of Blair candidates



Anderson: delighted at gains of women

Continued from page 1

cluded in the study, 242 are sitting MPs who are likely to return to Parliament.

However, the study provides the first detailed profile of 152 new candidates who are likely to enter Parliament for the first time in 1997. They are revealed to be dramatically different in character and background to their experienced counterparts. Most strikingly, a third are women. Few come from the unions — only 11 have worked as union officials or researchers. This compares with 47 sitting MPs who once had union jobs.

Only 60 of the new candidates are

even members of a union, compared to 157 sitting MPs. At the same time, only three of the new candidates are former manual workers: two steel workers and a fitter.

Twenty-one of the new candidates have worked either as national Labour party officials or as MPs' research assistants. 13 come from the media, 40 were educated at independent fee-paying schools, and 23 were educated at either Oxford or Cambridge Universities.

But by far the most common experience is in local government — a massive 109 of the new candidates are or have been councillors. Including the sitting MPs, the new Labour

party will have a total of 256 former councillors on its backbenches.

The findings on women will be seen as proof that Labour's controversial "women-only shortlists" policy was effective in securing safe seats for women before it was outlawed by an industrial tribunal last January. Under the policy, Labour aimed to fill half of its winnable and vacant seats with women candidates.

Janet Anderson, the Shadow Minister for Women, said: "I am delighted. It vindicates what we have done to make sure that women are in winnable seats." She added that many constituencies which had been prevented from using women-only

shortlists had nevertheless gone on to select women anyway.

Mr Blair has yet to attract that many businesswomen. Only 19 have worked as directors in the private sector and only 24 as managers, most of whom are MPs already. Some 26 have worked as managers in the voluntary sector and 15 as managers in the health service. However, the party will include for the first time one fireman and one taxi driver.

Of the likely MPs, 265 are married, of whom 147 have children. Thirty-three are divorced and have not remarried, and five are separated. The average age of the sitting MPs is 52, while for the new

candidates it is 43.

In replies to a questionnaire, most MPs and candidates understandably failed to list their more bizarre pastimes in the study, but some were disarmingly frank. Michael Meacher, the former Labour minister, reveals that he practices cosmology. Jim Cousins, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central, likes "composting". Barbara Follett, the candidate for Stevenage and former style guru, plays Scrabble on her days off. Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, enjoys cooking puddings; while Andrew Dismore, 42, a candidate for Hendon, likes studying "modern Greek history".

Straw to bide time on Lords reforms

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR refused to commit itself yesterday to immediate reform of the House of Lords but retained the right to create hundreds of peers to overcome any Tory opposition to its plans.

Jack Straw, Shadow Home Secretary, insisted that Labour remained committed to abolishing the right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the Lords.

But he backed away from committing the party to reform in the first year of a Labour government and appeared to be more conciliatory towards Tory hereditary peers, some of whom would continue to play an active role under Labour.

Mr Straw made clear that some hereditary peers would escape Labour's proposals to abolish their right to sit and vote in the House of Lords. He cited Viscount Whitelaw, the former Tory Home Secretary, as an example of a first-generation hereditary peer who would be entitled to continue in the Lords.

He said that it had always been acknowledged that there were some hereditary peers who — but for the fact that they were hereditary — would be there in their own right as life peers.

Although he said that reform would be a high priority of an incoming Labour government, he refused to offer a precise timetable. And he said that the possibility of creating 700 Labour peers to get their legislation through "remained in the background".

Blair's secret cheerleaders turn out to be wearing the wrong colours

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A SECRET plan by a Labour research body to recruit certain of industry to act as cheerleaders for Tony Blair in the run-up to the election has come unstuck.

Several of those targeted by Labour to try to counter the impact of big business supporting John Major were astonished to have been lined up as possible recruits.

Sir Clive Thompson, group chief executive of Rentokil Initial, who was on the confidential list, was particularly bemused. He is a lifelong Conservative party member.

Professor Alan Watson, chairman of the public affairs company Burston-Marsteller (Europe), is a Liberal Democrat. Far from endorsing Tony Blair, he will be assisting Paddy Ashdown's election campaign.

The list of potentially sympathetic businessmen was drawn up by Neal Lawson, who runs Nexus, a new Labour organisation set up to involve intellectuals and academics in Labour policy discussions. He detailed his proposals in a memorandum to Peter Mandelson, who is in charge of Labour's general election campaign.

The Lawson memo, a copy of which has been passed to The Times, said that they had to push hard for business endorsements on tactical issues such as the minimum wage and Europe. "A realistic goal is to neutralise business influence on the election outcome. The means to achieve this could be a third party



Unlikely supporters: Sir Clive and Mr Broughton



organisation led by business figures whose aim was to take the politics out of the relationship between government and private sector," he wrote.

Mr Lawson, a leading figure in the Labour co-ordinating committee, even suggested the message of the group. He wrote: "Both parties have many good policies for business. We will work equally well with whoever wins the next election. We will advise and comment on all the parties' policies but we will not publicly endorse either party."

Mr Lawson, one of Labour's brightest young intellectuals, is aware of the sensitivity of the issue. "Getting the right people to front this would need to be handled carefully and thoughtfully."

Sir Clive said: "I am always open to persuasion by quality thinking. But I would be very surprised if I could be persuaded by the Labour Party. I have been a member of the Conservative Party for years. I look forward to John Major winning the next election."

Professor Watson said: "I am very surprised to be on this list. Maybe the Labour Party has not realised that I am a long-standing member of the Liberal Democrats. Not only will I be helping with their general election campaign but I have been a parliamentary candidate in the past. I am unlikely, therefore, to want to help Tony Blair."

Martin Broughton, group chief executive of BAT Industries, was also suitably unimpressed after being told that he was on the list. A spokesman for Mr Broughton said: "No, thank you."

Veteran Tory seen as stopgap for Scott seat

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A NEW candidate has emerged as a frontrunner to succeed Sir Nicholas Scott as MP for Kensington and Chelsea, one of the safest Tory seats in the country. Gerald Bowden, who held the Tory marginal of Dulwich from 1983 until he was defeated in 1992, has entered the selection contest.

Nominations close at 5pm for the seat which, with a national majority of 21,000, was regarded as a job for life

until Sir Nicholas ended up face down in a gutter at the Conservative Party conference in October.

Mr Bowden, 61, has impeccable local credentials. He is a member of the Chelsea Arts Club, as are many members of the association. His age, far from being a hindrance, would be regarded as an asset in the association, which was badly split by the deselection of Sir Nicholas.

Few of the 4,000 members would expect, or probably want, him to serve more than one term, by which time a

younger, more ambitious, candidate would be available to fight the seat.

There remains strong support for the candidacy of Sir John Wheeler, 56, the Northern Ireland Minister, whose London seat is disappearing in boundary changes. A clutch of younger frontrunners include Martin Howe, the Euro-sceptic barrister, a nephew of Lord Howe of Aberavon.

Edward Bickham, a former political adviser to Douglas Hurd, is the leading young Turk in the pack. Jonathan Hill, a former political

secretary to John Major, is also thought to have expressed an interest.

The leading women contenders are Sarah Whitthouse, a lawyer, who was runner-up to take over from Sir Patrick Mayhew in Tunbridge Wells. Joan Hannah, leader of Kensington and Chelsea council, has the support of Tory council colleagues.

The outsider on the list of applicants is Alan Clark, the former Defence Minister who stood down at the last election and has made little secret of the fact he has regretted it ever since.

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New Year party gatecrashers axe teenager in head

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A TEENAGER was struck on the head with an axe by gatecrashers who forced their way into a New Year's Eve party at a friend's house. Detectives launched an attempted murder inquiry yesterday as Anthony Brickwood, 18, lay in a neurological unit with his parents at his bedside.

He has a 4in deep wound at the back of his head and a fractured skull. It is believed that he ducked to avoid a blow which was aimed at his face. Police said that the party, on a naval housing estate in Cosham, Hampshire, was attended by a large number of juveniles, with no adults present to supervise.

Mr Brickwood had been celebrating with his parents earlier in the evening. They next saw him lying in hospital, where he recovered consciousness long enough to say "Hello, Dad". His family were told that the location of the injury would make immediate surgery too dangerous.

His father, Paul Brickwood, 38, said: "He was with us earlier in the evening and with a group of friends we knew. Later they all went on to a party at one of their homes. Anthony was enjoying himself when a group of gatecrashers tried to force their way in."

"He was just called to the door to help out when one of them pulled out an axe and swung it at Anthony's face. Thank God he ducked and it

caught the back of his head."

An ambulance crew found him on the floor of the house and took him to the Queen Alexandra Hospital, at Cosham. He was later transferred to Southampton General Hospital. "The doctors have told us that Anthony has a fractured skull and a six-inch gash just above his hairline on the back of his neck," said his father.

"The doctors said they will not operate as it is too dangerous. He became conscious for a short while and recognised me. He said 'Hello Dad'. We are just hoping and praying that he will be all right."

The injured teenager's mother, Deborah, 36, added: "The doctors have said they won't be operating on him for

24 hours as there is a fragile vein running through the injured area, which means that any attempt to operate could be life-threatening. He's drifting in and out of consciousness."

"At the moment, all I want to do is be with my son. He has a little sister, Elizabeth, who is only ten, and she's absolutely devastated. Anthony had been so happy. He started work as a car paint-sprayer only a few weeks ago, and was really enjoying it."

Police recovered a hand axe from the scene of the attack. Inspector Barry Jakeman, of Hampshire police, said: "The party was attended by a huge amount of juveniles. The fight started just after midnight."

"It is evident that there was a lot of drink at the party, and no adults present to supervise."

"As a result, it got out of hand and a young man suffered very serious head injuries. This was a very serious crime. What started out as an innocent party has turned into an attempted murder inquiry."

Last night four youths were helping police with inquiries. Two brothers aged 13 and 14 were released into care yesterday by magistrates at North Shields. Tyne and Wear, accused of robbery and wounding a bus driver with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. Their alleged victim, Munir Hashmi, 60, suffered serious head injuries.



Anthony Brickwood: wound is 4ins deep



Royal party heads for the slopes

The Prince of Wales and Prince Harry shared their chair-lift on Mount Gotschna near Klosters yesterday with Santa Palmer-Tomkinson, 26, left, and her sister Tara, 25, a part-time model and gossip columnist. The Palmer-Tomkinsons and their parents, Charles and Patti, were among those with whom the Prince saw in the new year at

a private dinner party at the 11-room Hotel Wasserhof. Also present were Mark Bolland, the Prince's new adviser and former director of the Press Complaints Commission, and Tiggy Legge-Bourke, the assistant who often accompanies the young princes. A

group out celebrating gathered under the Prince's balcony and sang their seasonal good wishes. Afterwards, the royal party went to the mountain-top holiday home of a Canadian family where as midnight struck they watched a fireworks display against

the backdrop of the Alps. The Prince and his 12-year-old son skied on Gotschna above Klosters yesterday. Prince Harry wore bright orange ski boots and a baseball cap while his father stuck to his usual understated style in a maroon wool hat and dark

blue ski suit. Prince William has not joined the skiing trip, preferring to extend his Christmas holiday at Sandringham. His reluctance to join his father is said partly to stem from his dislike of the continental paparazzi who are present in large numbers and will be following every step of the royal party during the next week.

Ecstasy blamed for death at first rave

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A TEENAGER who collapsed and died on the dance floor at a New Year's Eve "rave" party may have taken the drug Ecstasy.

Bilal Hussien Bhayat, 18, from Aston, Birmingham, collapsed just after 1am among 5,000 revellers at the Cardiff International Arena. As they continued to dance, unaware of the tragedy, Mr Bhayat was given first aid by St John Ambulance volunteers and taken to Cardiff Royal Infirmary by paramedics. He was pronounced dead on arrival.

Last night, South Wales police said he was in possession of an unknown tablet just before his death. They said that Ecstasy was being offered for sale at the event.

Mr Bhayat had been at the £27.50 ticket event for two hours. He had travelled to the arena, which has not hosted a rave before, with his older brother and three other teenagers. A post-mortem examination carried out by a Home Office pathologist failed to establish the exact cause of death, and the results of toxicology tests for drugs may not be known for three days.

However, police believe Mr Bhayat's death was drug-related. Detective Constable Tony Hinchey said: "We suspect the death is drug-related. We are interviewing the boy's brother and friends who accompanied him to the rave."

Police are also examining a possible link with contaminated amphetamine being offered at the rave. Drugs squad officers are concerned that a contaminated batch of the drug Speed could be circulating in South Wales.

It is the first time a rave has been held at the arena, usually a venue for touring artists. The local authority granted a late licence until 2am with revellers being allowed to dance for another four hours.

Newlyweds refuse to let IRA van bomb spoil wedding day reception

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A NEWLY married couple refused to allow the IRA to ruin their wedding reception when terrorists abandoned a bomb in the grounds of Belfast Castle on New Year's Eve.

Sam and Karen Thompson, who were just starting a civil wedding reception, were forced to evacuate the castle and moved the party to a draughty hall next to the church where they had been married only hours before.

Less than half an hour after the bomb alert, guests were dancing to music from a small cassette recorder in the hall of the Trinity Reformed Presbyterian church at Mossley, north Belfast. The couple flew off yesterday for their honeymoon on a Nile cruise.

The security alert began at 9pm on New Year's Eve when staff at the castle in the north of the city noticed a white van abandoned on the main drive. As they alerted police, the IRA telephoned coded bomb warnings to newsrooms in Belfast saying that a

"landmine" had been abandoned in a van outside the castle. The terrorists, who may have been on their way to attack a police or Army base, said they abandoned the bomb because of security patrols in the area.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said the IRA were criminal gangsters sending a brutal new year message. He said: "It is a new year message which shows that the IRA have turned away from their twin strategy of terrorism and temptation. Terrorism and violence in order to get a political objective. Temptation, through soft words, to tempt us into appeasing them. I reject that message with disgust and contempt."

Army bomb disposal experts yesterday carried out a controlled explosion on a plastic bin in the back of the van after examining the device for almost 16 hours. They worked slowly because of fears that the IRA may have

tried to entice them into the castle grounds towards a second bomb. Another wedding reception went ahead at the castle last night.

Friends and relatives of Sam Thompson, 31, and his bride Karen, 27, spoke of the calm way in which they responded to the alert. Simon Thompson, the groom's brother, who was an usher, said: "He was gutted when we had to leave the castle. But he joked that the Lord works in mysterious ways."

Mr Thompson said they cheered up when one of the guests suggested continuing the party in the church hall. Friends and relatives rushed home to bring tea and biscuits to the hall where the bride started the dancing wearing a green coat over her wedding dress in the freezing hall. At midnight a friend played *Auld Lang Syne* on his flute as everyone sang in the new year.

Mr Thompson said: "We defied the IRA because we were determined not to allow them to disturb the wedding. God had decided to put Karen and Sam together and nothing was going to stop that. It was nice to finish the evening with such strong fellowship."

The bride and groom, from Ballyclare, Co Antrim, met through the church group in Mossley they have attended for the past 15 years. Sam, an architect, has designed an orphanage in Romania and regularly takes aid to East European countries. On one trip he was almost shot by Croatian gunmen who mistook him for a gunrunner.

The IRA, which tried to murder two police officers and a Unionist politician in a Belfast hospital just before Christmas, refrained from launching any attacks over the holiday. However, the Belfast Castle bomb showed that they are determined to step up their campaign in the new year.



Karen and Sam Thompson moved to church hall

Man held over pensioner's murder

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A 25-YEAR-OLD man was arrested yesterday in connection with the murder of a 90-year-old man on New Year's Eve.

Will Mann, a retired cobbler who lived alone after the death of his wife five years ago, was tied up with cord and beaten about the head before he was strangled at his home in Ushaw Moor, Co Durham.

He was found dead on his living room floor by a council care worker and a neighbour who had called at his home on Tuesday morning. Police believe Mr Mann may have disturbed a thief. A man dressed in a distinctive turquoise jacket

was seen running across Mr Mann's back garden shortly before his body was discovered.

Yesterday, hours after appealing to the public for information about Mr Mann's death, police said that a man aged 25 from the neighbouring Co Durham pit village of New Brancepeth was arrested on New Year's Eve night. He was still in custody last night.

The death of Mr Mann, who served in the Navy in the Second World War, has shocked the local community. Detective Superintendent David Grey said: "Every-one who went to the scene was appalled by what they saw. Not just because of the

time of year, but at the sight of a 90-year-old man, who clearly was no bother or harm to anyone, to have finished his life in such a violent way."

Mr Mann had two brothers, Leslie, 87, and Mark, 85, who lived in neighbouring villages. Both were still too upset to talk about their brother's death last night.

A neighbour said: "After the death of Eva, his wife, Will spent a lot of time taking walks alone. He would go and sit on the bench in the park and just quietly watch the world go by. Everyone knew him as he was the local cobbler but he was known by a lot of people as a decent man besides."

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Cycling reveller dies in frozen pond

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A NEW-YEAR reveller is believed to have fallen off his bicycle on his way home and died after staggering into the icy waters of a pond. People who heard his cries thought he was just a merry drunk. At first, police were puzzled about the identity of the man, even though he had a distinctive tattoo on his chest. It read: "Dirty deeds done dirt cheap." They later identified him.

The 25-year-old, who has not yet been named, is believed to be unemployed and is the father of a six-year-old boy. He lived near Normanton, west Yorkshire, and was found at the edge of Pylon Pond in the town.

The body was discovered by David Dunbar, 61, as he walked his dog. He noticed cycle tracks and marks and then

saw an apparently new mountain bike lying in the snow beside the track on a bank eight feet above the water.

Mr Dunbar said: "It looked to me as if this poor bloke has fallen off his bike twice, perhaps he had been celebrating the new year. The second time he had fallen down the bank towards the water. Then, in his confusion, as he tried to get out, he had ended up in the water, which was frozen over."

Yesterday a group of travellers living in caravans a quarter of a mile from the pond said they had heard the sounds of a man shouting. One man said: "At first I thought it was the dogs, but then I realised it was a man shouting. It didn't sound like he was in trouble. It went on for about 15 minutes. We just thought it was a new-year drunk."

Police were also trying to identify a young woman found battered to death in

the garden of an empty house in Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, yesterday. The body was discovered by Valerie Connolly, the wife of the vicar of a nearby church, and the woman may have been killed on New Year's Eve or early on New Year's Day.

The woman, aged in her 20s, had been battered about the head but no weapon was found. The woman's clothing had been interfered with but it was not clear if she had been sexually assaulted.

Mrs Connolly and her husband Daniel moved into their house on Saturday, after Mr Connolly was transferred from a parish in Portsmouth. Their new home is next door to the garden where the body was discovered.

Mr Connolly said: "It's very shocking, my wife was obviously very upset. It's not really the kind of welcome we would have wished for."



The missing girl

Kayleigh police ask for help

By STEWART TENDLER

POLICE have enlisted the help of the National Missing Persons Helpline in their hunt for Kayleigh Ward, the nine-year-old girl from Chester who vanished shortly before Christmas.

As the charity began preparing posters yesterday as part of its appeal for help in tracing Kayleigh, Cheshire police asked the public for more assistance in finding her.

Kayleigh, described as streetwise, vanished after going to buy chips for a neighbour on December 19. She lived with her mother and two sisters in a hostel in Chester.

She often spent time with travellers and tramps near her home. Police have contacted a number of travellers' camps in North Wales and have also been in touch with Irish police.

Missing persons: charity receives twice as many calls from runaways as last winter

Videotape convinces parents that their daughter is not dead

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE parents of a teenager who went missing more than a year ago are convinced that a grainy videotape proves that their daughter is still alive.

Ruth Wilson, a bright 16-year-old, vanished on Monday November 27, 1995, leaving empty pill bottles at a local beauty spot near her comfortable home at Beithworth, near Dorking, Surrey. There had been no sightings of her until, on the anniversary of her disappearance, a teenager entered a newsagents in Dorking and asked for local newspapers. She was distressed and became more emotional when told that one of the newspapers was sold out. The events were recorded by the shop's video cameras.

The teenager was such a compelling figure that the newsagent contacted the authorities. Karen Wilson, a deputy head teacher, and her husband, Ian, a school department head, have pored over the video many times.

Initially they did not believe it was their daughter but have become convinced of the identity. It is the first glimmer of hope that the couple have allowed themselves since Ruth went missing.

Their pain is constant. "Little things trigger it off."

Mrs Wilson said, "We cannot really go ahead until we know where Ruthie is. In the dark moments, you believe she can't possibly be alive. Other times you are convinced she is out there somewhere."

In Ruth's bedroom her books, clothes and electric guitar are as she left them. The sixth former, who was studying chemistry and biology A levels, gave no sign of a personal crisis.

A taxi driver dropped her outside a public house at Box Hill. When she failed to return, police and volunteers searched 1,000 acres of rough parkland with dogs, helicopters and heat-seeking scan-

ners. Police discovered that she had visited a florist's and, two days after she went missing, a bouquet was delivered to her parents. There was no card attached.

Several days later police found three notes hidden under a bush in the Box Hill undergrowth. They amounted to farewells to her parents, her best friend and a boy she knew. Near by were empty packets of paracetamol tablets and a bottle of alcohol.

Police continue with routine checks. The Wilsons are heartened by police assurances that if Ruth was dead her body would have turned up by now.

However, it is the National Missing Persons Helpline charity and the Leatherhead police upon whom the couple have come to rely. "They have been superb," Mr Wilson said. "We are in regular contact."

Ruth's disappearance has been hard on her sister Jenny, 14. On one occasion she collapsed into sobs in the bedroom she shared with her music-loving sister. "I miss her so much," she told her mother.

Between her own tears Mrs Wilson said: "We want to tell her, we love you so much. Just get in contact, Ruthie. Let us know where you are."



Ruth Wilson: gave no sign of personal crisis



Karen and Ian Wilson: "We cannot go ahead until we know where Ruthie is"

Line of hope that can bring families together

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A TELEPHONE line set up to reassure families that missing sons and daughters are safe has been receiving twice as many calls over this Christmas and new year period as last winter.

Most calls to Message Home, the confidential free-call service run by the National Missing Persons Helpline, are from boys of 15 and girls of 17, but the average age is falling. The charity is also concerned at evidence that an increasing number of girls are being targeted by pimps to work as prostitutes.

The line enables runaways to leave a reassuring message for their families without risk of giving themselves away. More than 250,000 people go missing from home each year, many of them over the festive period when family tensions bubble to the surface.

The charity, which welcomes donations, is based above a supermarket in south-east London, has 60 volunteers, a handful of staff, and about 14,000 files on its computer database. It receives more than 80,000 telephone calls a year. The faces of about 140 "young vulnerables" stare out of the charity's adverts on the pages of *The Big Issue* magazine, on Carlton TV or on Body Shop vans. Two out of every three cases publicised in this way are resolved.

The charity is negotiating with Railtrack to place posters at every major station. "These are often the first ports of call for runaways," Jane Pearson, Message Home's manager, said. "The worrying aspect is that the age of callers is going down every year."

Recently Ms Pearson received a call from an 11-year-old who had left home that day and found herself frightened, alone and penniless. When the charity contacted the family, they found the mother in tears and the father roaming the streets desperately searching for his daughter.

The parents were persuaded not to call the police but to keep the telephone line open. After several lengthy conversations on the charity line, the child agreed to ring her parents and return home.

In another case, the charity helped a family whose daughter ran away as a 15-year-old after her parents refused to allow her stay at an all-night party. They were reunited three years later.

Ms Pearson said: "The parents burst into tears and set off the next morning to see her. As a teenager you think nobody loves you at home. Everything in your world has gone wrong. You tell them their parents are in floods of tears and then they burst into tears themselves. They say: 'I thought nobody loved me.'"

"Christmas is a busy time. People are thinking of their families and those on the streets believe everyone else is going back to their families. It is cold and miserable. They see everyone having fun with friends and family."

There is concern among workers at an apparent increase in the numbers of girls under 16 being lured into prostitution in London. They are as young as 13 and 14, and most are runaways from care homes.

One of the 140 cases termed "young vulnerable" is a naive, 14-year-old Welsh girl who was picked up by a pimp and set up in a brothel in King's Cross. She is subjected to violence routinely to keep her in line. Her calls to the helpline are heart-breaking.

□ National Missing Persons Helpline: 0500 700 700.
□ Message Home: 0500 700 740.

How artist creates teenage face of vanished child

By A STAFF REPORTER

SHE looks like a happy, slightly impish 14-year-old, with the first signs of maturity showing in her face. The impression is mistaken.

The picture is an age-enhanced portrait of Loubna Benaissa, who went missing at the age of nine on August 5, 1992, when she went to buy some yoghurt at the local store near her home in Brussels. The enhancement was created by the National Missing Persons Helpline at the request of the Belgian police conducting the Dutroux inquiry into a series of paedophile murders.

The charity is the only organisation in Europe with the technology and skills to produce such a computer-aided portrait. In the light of fresh information, police had reopened the files on Loubna's disappearance more than four years after she went missing. Now the picture of how she would look today has been used for a renewed public appeal.

The picture was painstakingly put together by Di Cullington, the charity's "progression artist", who also helped Gloucester police to identify four of the victims in the Frederick West serial murder case. Recently she updated the portrait of Ben Needham, the 21-month-old boy who disappeared from the Greek island of Kos on July 24, 1991. For the Belgian

assignment, it took a week to create Loubna's portrait as a young teenager based on minute examination of the way her closest siblings, three older brothers and sisters, have aged.

The artist said: "I was worried that I might not be able to do Loubna's picture because it is so harrowing. When you get the photographs, you cut off your emotions and get on with the job. After it was over, I breathed a sigh of relief."

In general, the shape of the skull and the forehead remains the same while the nose, cheek bones and chin are more dynamic. The older Loubna's nose and neck are elongated, the lips slightly more pronounced and the hair scraped back with fly-away strands.

However the artist was careful not to lose the little girl totally. Chillingly, she says that if Loubna had been snatched by a paedophile ring, and prostituted, then she would not have been allowed to grow up.

Ms Cullington was trained at the National Centre for the Missing and Exploited in Washington DC. She is one of a handful of artists around the world with the expertise to carry out such work.

She said: "It is like doing a complicated jigsaw puzzle. It is 50 per cent art work and 50 per cent computer wizardry."



The young Loubna, left, and the enhanced picture



Nurses' confession may have been improperly obtained

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A CONFESSION alleged to have been made by the two British nurses accused of murdering an Australian colleague in Saudi Arabia may have been improperly obtained, the senior Saudi lawyer defending them said yesterday.

Salah Al-Hejailan said that he was aware of reports that Deborah Parry, 41, from the Midlands, was retracting her confession, which would have been made before three judges, but he had no first-hand knowledge of this. He

said retracting a confession was unusual in Saudi Arabia. Mr Al-Hejailan said: "Maybe someone said if you sign, you will just be deported — I have seen circumstances like that in the past. Or maybe an interpreter or translator gave that information."

The lawyer plans to see Ms Parry and Lucille McLauchlan, 31, from Dundee, on Saturday. Mr Al-Hejailan is also planning an appeal for clemency to the family of Yvonne Gifford, 55. He said the Gifford family held the key to the lives of the two women. "It is the family of a victim that declares a desire or declares

forgiveness. If they declare forgiveness, a judge would not allow capital punishment. If they insist on capital punishment, a judge would consider it very seriously."

Under Sharia — Islamic law — the family of a murder victim can demand a death penalty or they can ask for the payment of *diah*, or blood money. If they waive this latter right, a sentence of five years or less could be imposed.

Mr Al-Hejailan said: "I think it would be quite devastating for the Western world if an Australian family is seen to be asking for capital punishment."

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The Archers recover their lost past in Tokyo and Kentucky

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

HUNDREDS of episodes of *The Archers*, thought to have been lost forever, have been unearthed as far afield as Tokyo, Kentucky and Pontypool.

The home-made recordings of the programme came to light after the BBC asked *The Archers* four million listeners to help to trace vintage episodes of the rural soap which the corporation had simply thrown away.

Vanessa Whitburn, editor of *The Archers*, said she was overwhelmed at the response to the appeal, which was launched in November. "People seem to have secreted tapes in attics, cellars and suitcases. We guessed this might be the case but could not be sure," she said.

Ms Whitburn said that the corporation was particularly keen on older episodes from the serial's early days in the 1950s and 1960s. "There was one episode in the early 1960s when Walter Gabriel bought a baby elephant to the

Ambridge fête. I hope that somewhere, amongst all the treasures that people are sending in, this episode will come to light," she said.

Paul Hickey, who first began listening to *The Archers* as a boy of ten in the 1960s, has collected over 150 hours, recorded for him between 1985 to 1989 when he worked for an American bank in Tokyo.

His *Archers* tapes had made him an instant hit with British expatriate wives. "When you are abroad, *The Archers* is the aural equivalent of Marmite, something quintessentially English and a welcome taste of home that you can't get anywhere else," he said.

Listening to *The Archers* is a regular Sunday tea-time habit of Philip and Margaret Chase, a Birmingham couple who live in Lexington, Kentucky. The couple left Britain in 1972 and have been sent tapes regularly by relatives. "It is one of those things that keeps you in touch with the old

country," Mr Chase, 49, an oil company executive, said.

Reginald Watkins, a sheep farmer from Pontypool, Gwent, has kept 80 tapes of *The Archers* recorded over the past 15 years. His collection is unusual because it consists of edited highlights rather than entire programmes. His tapes contain valuable scenes with older characters such as Walter Gabriel and Mrs P.

The *Archers* appeal resulted from the BBC's previous policy of re-recording over old tapes. Between 1951 and 1989 only episodes containing momentous scenes such as births, marriages and deaths were kept. The introduction of digital technology in the early 1990s, which enables material to be stored in a fraction of the space occupied by old-fashioned tape reels, means that now all episodes are kept.

The tapes provided by *Archers* fans will be used to make a further compilation tape for sale by the BBC.



Sister act: twins Karen and Sarah Steben, 21, of Montreal, whose Duo Trapeze act forms part of the *Salimbanco* show by the Cirque du Soleil. The show, at the Royal Albert Hall until January 19, blends theatre, dance, acrobatics, music, costume and a dramatic light show

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Employers admit they still lend an ear to accents

By JOE JOSEPH

THE spirit might be willing, but the flesh is still weak when it comes to not discriminating against people with the sorts of accent you hear in gritty Alan Bleasdale dramas or from Benny at the late *Crossroads* motel.

The Institute of Personnel and Development came to that insight after questioning recruitment specialists, who confessed that, yes, people with strong regional accents were often discriminated against at work or when applying for jobs.

The basic gist is that if you have a Liverpool, Glasgow or Birmingham accent, and you are really keen to get that job, then learn sign language before your interview. Those are the three accents that are seen as "negative" by some employers.

But if you are a Glaswegian entrepreneur or personnel director you get your own back, because in Scotland an upper-class English accent "positively incites hostility", according to the chief executive of one recruitment firm.

Accent, one London recruitment consultant told the institute, "communicates background, education and birthplace and frankly, some backgrounds are more marketable than others. I would advise anyone with a 'redbrick' or industrial accent to upgrade. Politicians and lawyers do it, so why shouldn't others?"

Another consultant said: "Let's face it — people with a Scouse accent sound whiny and people with Brummie accents sound stupid."

A Dorset woman told the survey that she had no idea how strong the attitude to accents was until she moved to London: "As soon as I opened my mouth, people



Worzel Gummidge: case for job discrimination?

would be queuing up to do Worzel Gummidge imitations. A lot of people seem to think that if you spoke with a Dorset accent, you were thick and uneducated. Some would even slow down or speak louder when they were talking to me."

John Major is doing what he can to set an example. In his drive for a classless Britain, in which all are judged on ability rather than accent, he has made Parliament a refuge for anyone who feels discriminated against because of how they speak. Major himself persists in saying "wunt" instead of "want". Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, calls us "pipples" instead of people, and John Prescott, the deputy leader of the Opposition, speaks in complex anagrams.

Dianah Worman, the Institute of Personnel and Development's equal opportunities policy adviser, says: "Decisions about people's suitability for jobs, promotion or training should only ever be based on merit and ability, not petty prejudice." She's probably against sin, too.

Parents' toy story costs them £1,750

By A STAFF REPORTER

PARENTS spend an average of £1,750 on toys for their children up to the age of 14, research has shown. Five-year-olds receive the most at £200 each a year, falling to £14 a year for those aged 12.

A survey of 3,800 youngsters for the toy manufacturer Lego found that the average family of 2.4 children spends £4,203 on toys by the time their sons and daughters reach 14. Girls said that they paid more attention to the "aesthetic beauty" of a toy, tending to prefer more realistic rather than artificial toys.

The survey found that girls read for pleasure and listened to the radio or music more than boys, who spent more time using a computer or playing sport. Swimming, cycling and football were the three most popular sports.

Girls of all ages were found to read more than boys and to progress quickly from comics to magazines. The average age of girls reading the magazine *Just 17* was 13, according to the survey.

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



TRAVEL '97

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■ An archaeological heritage that dates "from the dawn of time" is being broken into tiny pieces to be sold to unscrupulous collectors in London, Dalya Alberge reports

A Nineveh figure photographed by Dr Russell as part of an Sift carving but now chipped out and stolen

Another small section sold to a Western collector

alongside one codenamed Green Parrot. This allows officers to identify a live species that might be an illegal consignment.

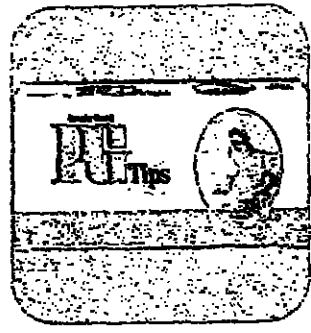
"It can be asked to search for all white parrots with a crest and blue eye ring," Mr Mackay said. The system then displays images of likely birds on the screen, with latin names, common names and countries of origin. The officer can zoom in on key features and view the animal from several directions. Green Parrot also covers reptiles, butterflies, corals and amphibians.

Leading article, page 17

[illegible]



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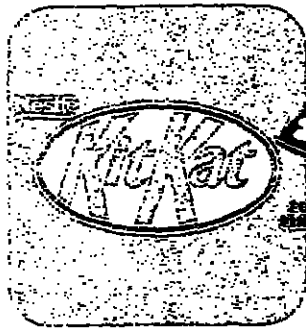


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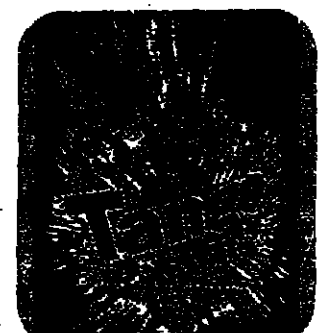


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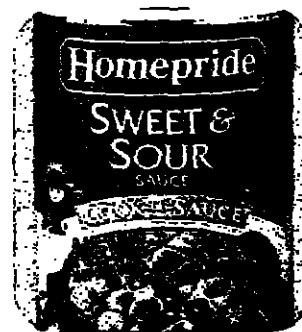
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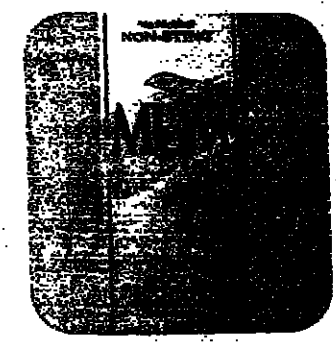
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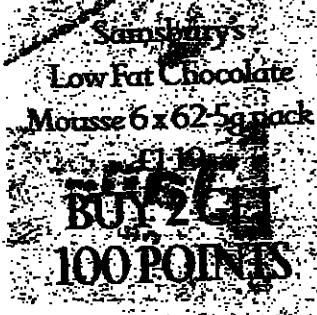
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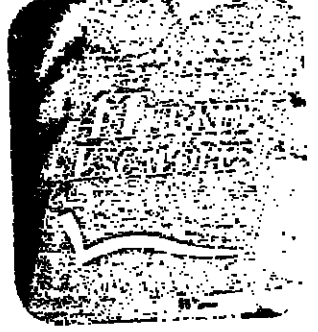
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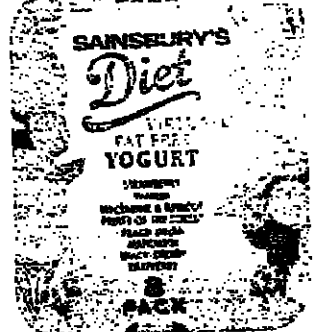
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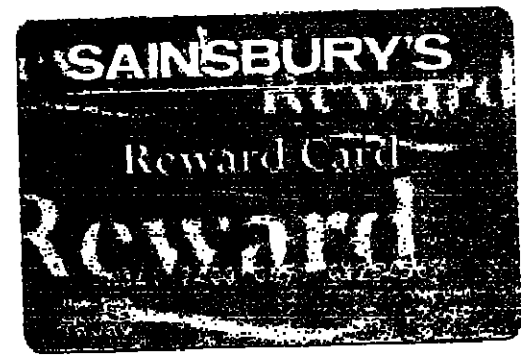
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Two Republicans throw lifeline to embattled Gingrich

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

NEWT GINGRICH received an unexpected boost yesterday in his fight to win re-election as Speaker of the US House of Representatives despite his admission of ethics violations.

Two Republicans on the ethics sub-committee who investigated Mr Gingrich declared that they will still vote for him. They also vowed to oppose any attempts to censure Mr Gingrich that would preclude him from holding the Speaker's chair.

This news was offset by an announcement from the ethics committee that it would not begin its deliberations on a punishment for Mr Gingrich until next Wednesday, one day after the full House is supposed to vote for a new Speaker. Nor will the agency be over quickly; the committee anticipates taking two weeks, with public hearings and no final action by the full House on punishment until January 21, the day after President Clinton's inauguration for his second term.

Mr Gingrich had already declared that he would stand for re-election, even if the committee was still pondering his fate. The 27 House Republicans are left in the awkward position of voting for him without knowing all the

facts. This puts a strain on the loyalty many feel towards him for leading their capture of the House in 1994 after 40 years in the minority.

So far 18 Republicans have been quoted as uneasy about having to vote before his punishment is known and many more have been pressured by editorials in their local newspapers to abandon Mr Gingrich for abusing the public trust.

Only one back-bencher, Michael Forbes of Long Island, has stated flatly that he will not vote for Mr Gingrich. But if 20 Republicans were to abstain they would provoke a disaster for the party by allowing the Democrats to elect their leader, Richard Gephardt, as Speaker. It is a powerful position and second only to the Vice-President in the line of succession to the presidency.

In an effort to avoid further slippage, a letter was faxed to all House Republicans from their two colleagues on the ethics committee who said their support for Mr Gingrich was solid. Porter Goss, of Florida, and Steve Schiff, of New Mexico, wrote: "We know of no reason now, nor do we foresee any in the normal course of events, why Newt

Gingrich would be ineligible to serve as Speaker." In other words, the pair think that censuring Mr Gingrich would be unwarranted and will opt instead for the lesser penalty of a reprimand, which would not require him to step down as Speaker. They could not guarantee, of course, that the eight other committee members — five Democrats and three Republicans — will feel the same way. The letter was greeted by Democrats as evidence of Mr Gingrich's crumbling support.

For all his troubles, no challenger to Mr Gingrich has emerged within the Republican ranks, a testament to his skill at building coalitions within the party. But if his chances of re-election become more precarious, Republicans may be forced to appoint a caretaker Speaker to fill in until his case is settled.

Mr Gingrich's problems stem from his televised college course, a scarcely disguised attempt to recruit new party members. He has admitted failing to ensure that he complied with laws barring use of tax-exempt charitable donations to pay for a partisan project and to misleading Congress about his connection to the funds.

Hashimoto attacks role of media in Lima siege

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI IN LIMA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

JAPAN'S Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto yesterday criticised the media for making direct contact with rebels holding 81 hostages at the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru.

"It has provided the guerrillas with a propaganda opportunity," Mr Hashimoto told reporters. "I think it may have hardened the Peruvian Government."

A score of photographers were admitted to the hostage compound on Tuesday. They talked to rebel leader Nestor Cerpa Cartolini and some captives, including Japan's Ambassador Morihisa Aoki.

Mr Aoki said he "must deeply apologise to the Japanese people and the Japanese Government for the situation because this occupation is caused by my lack of virtue," according to an interview broadcast on Japanese television.

The hostages were seized by a Tupac Amaru "suicide squad" at a party on December 17. Those that remain are largely key military figures and top police officials.

Red Cross workers kept up their supply of food and water to the besieged residence, and delivered smoked salmon, turkeys, and cakes to "celebrate" the new year. But the



Nestor Cerpa, left, the rebel leader who still holds 81 hostages, including Morihisa Aoki, the Japanese Ambassador

hostages must have spent the first hours of 1997 wondering whether they would ever get out. President Fujimori announced he was running out of patience and did not rule out the use of force to end the stand off. "To rule out the use of force I want to see the terrorists putting down their arms and releasing the hostages first," he said yesterday. The rebels say they will not budge from their main de-

mand for the release of hundreds of imprisoned guerrillas serving life sentences in remote, high-security prisons.

"We came into the Japanese Ambassador's home with the intention of getting our comrades out of inhuman prisons and will not be leaving until this happens. We are ready to hold out for weeks," Señor Cerpa, told the cameramen on Tuesday.

His "array" of young guer-

illas dressed in battle fatigues and all wearing red and white bandanas across their faces — some are women no older than 18 — showed off their arsenal of weapons to photographers. Television pictures showed that sofas and dining tables inside the Japanese Ambassador's home have been piled up as shields against the windows.

"It looks like the rebels are now ready to get tough and

have in their hands all the people who have been their traditional enemies," said a Western diplomat.

"It becomes harder and harder to envisage an end without bloodshed," he added.

Security and government officials say they expect a drawn out stand-off that could last for weeks, but are also drawing up plans for military intervention.

New UN chief to coax America over \$1.3bn debt

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE first task facing Kofi Annan, who took office yesterday as Secretary-General of the United Nations, will be to repair the organisation's fractured relations with America.

High on Mr Annan's agenda is a trip to Washington — likely to be his first official visit — to discuss a suggested "grand bargain" that would offer UN reform in exchange for America paying its \$1.3 billion (£780 million) debt to the organisation.

President Clinton has invited the new UN chief to visit the White House before Inauguration Day on January 20, and Jesse Helms, the veteran conservative senator, has suggested that he meet members of his powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which decides US funding.

In his inaugural address to the UN General Assembly, Mr Annan said that he would seek agreement of UN member states on how to "reposition" the organisation for the next century. "Kofi is not planning revolution," one aide cautioned. "He is going to be scaling back and seeking consensus."

Mr Annan will be helped in his relations with the Americans by the perception that he

was installed at America's behest after Washington used its veto power in the Security Council to oust the Egyptian incumbent, Boutros Boutros Ghali.

As the former head of the UN peacekeeping department during the traumatic missions in Somalia and Bosnia, Mr Annan also enjoys the confidence of the new US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who spent the last four years as Washington's Ambassador at the UN.

The Clinton Administration is expected to propose in its forthcoming budget recommendations to Congress that the United States pay off its UN debt in installments. The proposal will face resistance in the Republican-controlled Congress, however, where key legislators are insisting on further proof that the UN will streamline its operations.

In an olive branch to Mr Annan, Mr Helms wrote in a letter: "If you choose to be an agent of real and deep-seated change you will find many supporters and even allies here in the US Congress."

Speaking on his last day in office, Dr Boutros Ghali lamented that he had been unable to solve the organisation's longstanding financial crisis, which largely stems from the American arrears. He added that he had tried to maintain a "minimum of independence" — a clear dig at the United States.

□ Tokyo's turn: Japan joined the UN Security Council, along with four other countries, and assumed the rotating presidency for a one-month stint. Costa Rica, Japan, Kenya, Portugal and Sweden were elected by the General Assembly on October 21 to sit on the Security Council for two years as non-permanent members. (AFP)



Annan: scaling back

US presidency gains new powers of veto

BY IAN BRODIE

FEW changes have been awaited with more anticipation in Washington than the new veto power given to the President under a law that came into effect yesterday.

The new authority, known as the line-item veto, enables President Clinton and his successors to strike specific spending or tax measures from legislation without killing a whole Bill.

The aim is to go after the so-called "pork barrel" projects that members of Congress slip into spending bills to benefit their own constituencies. Another target will be the special tax breaks for firms or industries that lawmakers attach to Bills as favours to lobbyists or big campaign contributors.

Ronald Reagan started pleading for a line-item veto 15

years ago, but although popular with voters, Mr Reagan's idea only became a reality when Republicans won control of both the House and Senate two years ago and passed the line-item veto under their Contract with America.

The Democratic Mr Clinton signed the Bill as part of his drive towards a balanced budget, saying that it would combat "special-interest boondoggles, tax loopholes and pure pork."

The Bill has already been challenged as unconstitutional in lawsuits that are winding their way through the courts. Another new law inspired by the Republicans that came into effect yesterday will cut off welfare benefits to an estimated 100,000 unemployed drug addicts and alcoholics.

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Elysée destroys clue to terror

FROM ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS

THE office of President Chirac was embarrassed yesterday by the disclosure that it had thrown away an envelope that could have helped investigators to track down Islamic terrorists operating in France.

The envelope, which contained a letter from the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, was thrown into a wastepaper bin and cannot be found, according to *Le Monde* newspaper. As a result, detectives are unsure how the letter arrived at the Elysée Palace shortly before Christmas and are unable to trace the people who sent it.

In the two-page letter, the group threatened to "destroy your country" unless the French Government cut all links with the Algerian regime of President Zouari.

It also implicitly admitted responsibility for the explosion that killed four people on the Paris Metro on December 3.

Al-Qaeda suspected guerrillas bombed a public works office in south-eastern Corsica yesterday, the police said. Nobody was hurt. (Reuters)

De Klerk accuses Mandela of letting South Africa drift

FROM REUTER IN JOHANNESBURG

PRESIDENT MANDELA'S Government is losing its grip and the people of South Africa are heading for huge disappointment, F. W. de Klerk, the former President, said yesterday. "The impression of a ship drifting downstream, apparently rudderless, is constantly compounded," he said in his message for 1997.

Mr de Klerk is the leader of the white-dominated National Party, which invented apartheid and then scrapped it with an apology to the five-to-one black majority four decades later. He listed as the Government's worst faults "the bungling of foreign affairs and, above all, the surging crime wave".

President Mandela, however, gave a sharply contrasting assessment in his new year message. "Across the land, the impact of reconstruction and development is beginning to be felt," he said. "In short, we have laid solid foundations; the challenge for 1997 is to build on them. By keeping our sights on the long term, we can manage the ebbs and flows of the present."

Mr de Klerk claimed that South Africans would soon experience enormous disappointment at unfulfilled promises on education, health and

development, and that this would haunt the Government. "The expectations aroused by President Mandela and the ANC [African National Congress] are enormous. Before long, the disappointment will take on the same proportions."

The former President, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Mr Mandela in 1993 for their roles in South Africa's transition, led his party out of the national unity coalition government last May, saying that the country had grown up enough to handle "fearless criticism" from a robust parliamentary opposition.

In this role his catalogue of woes included the ailing currency, which has lost 30 per cent of its value against the dollar in less than a year.

He also cited the continued drain of "brainpower and experience" of white emigrants, driven out by an ailing economy and one of the highest violent crime rates — 52 murders every day — in the world.

President Mandela's message was that progress had been made in redressing the skewed development which saw the white minority dominating blacks for 350 years.

"We can take pride in the

fact that millions of people have gained access to water, electricity and healthcare; that a national education system that will afford quality education is taking shape; that land reform and our housing programmes are now firmly on track," he said.

Business Day newspaper, the country's leading financial daily, meanwhile said that people were now more realistic than in the heady days after the 1994 elections.

Wish-lists have given way to the realisation that not everything can be solved because we are democratic and popular and, even if it could, we do not have the money to do so," it said in an editorial comment. "Expectations, both in government and among the people, are being scaled down."

Open prison: Tourists yesterday panned their video cameras through the bars of Mr Mandela's former jail cell, where he spent 18 of his 27 years in prison, as South Africa threw open Robben Island prison to the public. The island was formally transferred at midnight on Tuesday from the Prisons Service to the Arts and Culture Department, which has declared it a museum.

Peking ushers in 1997 with praises for Deng

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

CHINA ushered in 1997 with a paean to senior leader Deng Xiaoping.

The state television broadcast yesterday the first episode of a documentary praising the political patriarch, a man whose pragmatic policies turned a backward Sino state into an economic powerhouse and helped to regain capitalist Hong Kong from Britain.

The programme, to be shown over 12 days, sets the tone for a crucial Communist Party congress due this year, largely by defining Mr Deng's legacy to the present party leadership. Chinese and Western political analysts said. "This is an extremely important year for the Communist Party with the recovery of Hong Kong and the holding of the fifteenth party congress," a Western diplomat said.

China's leaders are reminding people that Deng was instrumental in regaining Hong Kong and they are using him to define their own policies at the congress and in the post-Deng era.

Mr Deng, 92, has not been seen in public in nearly three years. At his last appearance he looked frail and unsteady. The documentary showed a vigorous leader, larger than life and portrayed against a background of golden clouds.

He was seen inspecting factories while wearing a hard hat, shaking hands with children and receiving gifts of poppies in Paris in the 1970s.

Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* reported yesterday that Mr Deng has experienced spells of unconsciousness almost every week since early last year. It said that he was placed in intensive care last Monday night when he again briefly became unconscious and his nurses were unable to wake him for supper at his home in central Peking.

However, the independent *Ming Pao*, also in Hong Kong, quoted a Xinhua news agency official as saying that reports that Mr Deng had been admitted to the hospital in a critical state were unfounded.



Runners in the annual 2,000m Great Wall race struggle against strong winds in temperatures of -25C (-13F) yesterday. Only 30 of the 2,000 entrants completed

Secret British bases plan revealed

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

SECRET negotiations to set up British military bases in Australia in the event of UK defence forces vacating or being "forced out" of Singapore and Malaysia, have been revealed in 1966 Cabinet documents that were released yesterday under Australia's 30-year rule.

The records show that the conservative Government of Harold Holt came under pressure from London to accommodate British forces. But senior ministers in Canberra were worried that the Labour Government of Harold Wilson would use such a guarantee as an excuse to withdraw from Asia altogether.

At a meeting of the Cabinet's foreign affairs and defence committee, Australian officials expressed concern that the British might want to get out of Singapore and Malaysia after 1970. One particular

minute recorded ministers arguing: "Britain appeared to hope for an eventual solution where countries on the Asian mainland would be neutral and non-aligned, and where non-Asian powers would withdraw to offshore bases, eg in the Philippines and Australia." But Canberra rejected this strategy as "wholly unrealistic" because it would abandon South-East Asia to "communist aggression", which was regarded as being orchestrated by China.

A frank exchange between Denis Healey, the Defence Secretary, and Cabinet ministers in Canberra early in 1966 offered an insight into Australia's strategic thinking, which drove the desire to keep British forces in Asia. During the meeting, ministers gave a warning that "a withdrawal by the British from Singapore

might lead to an American withdrawal from the mainland of Asia" and also emphasised the importance of Britain in containing China. Mr Healey is reported to have openly acknowledged British forces were positioned to help to check "Chinese communist expansion".

Australia's relations with Asia were not restricted to military matters, yesterday's publication of Cabinet documents revealed. It also emerged that the country's "white Australia" immigration policy was relaxed in name only, as the Government continued to discriminate against Asians well into the early 1970s. A Cabinet meeting noted that the relaxation of immigration policy "should not be the means of giving rise to new admissions of non-Europeans (Asians) in large numbers".

Thousands join protest in Belgrade

Belgrade: At least a quarter of a million people staged a huge new year rally here to demand democracy in Serbia, blowing whistles and ringing alarm clocks in an ear-splitting re-buff to President Milosevic.

The Socialist leader only hours before had ignored six weeks of opposition street protests against electoral fraud in his new year's message to federal Serbian-led Yugoslavia, saying 1996 had been a very good year. Western sources said Mr Milosevic had also snubbed a group of EU diplomats. (Reuters)

Sack for 1m

Tehran: Iranian employers have been told to fire a million foreign workers, mostly Afghan refugees, by Saturday, because they are illegal aliens. The unemployment rate is 11 per cent. (Reuters)

Kashmir deaths

Srinagar: Thirteen people, including a bank manager, were killed and 29 others injured in overnight clashes in the northern Indian state of Kashmir, police said. Troops killed four Muslim rebels. (AFP)

Gambia poll call

Banjul: President Jammeh of The Gambia has urged voters to ensure a big turnout for today's parliamentary elections finalising the transition from military rule in the small West African state. (Reuters)

Muslims to die

Paris: Algerian courts sentenced 15 Muslims to death for "belonging to armed terrorist groups", the APS official Algerian news agency reported. Three of the men were tried in their absence. (Reuters)

Skydive survival

Sydney: Two Australian skydivers survived a 1,600ft fall after colliding in mid-air as hundreds watched at the national skydiving championships in Corowa. 335 miles from Sydney. (Reuters)

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Byzantium's 'last frontier' explored by British experts

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

DEPLOYING technology first used to study Hadrian's Wall, archaeologists are trying to unravel the secrets of Europe's other great defensive structure, the Long Wall built by the Emperor Anastasius during the sixth century AD.

The 30-mile wall once cut the Thracian peninsula in two and was referred to by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall* as the Roman Empire's "last frontier". It was intended as the ultimate line of defence between a world inhabited by Goths and Bulgars and the hinterland of Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Empire.

James Crow, of Newcastle University, who spent two decades studying Hadrian's Wall, is now wrestling with the suggestion that the Thracian wall was not only part of a much more complex defensive structure than previously thought, but that it was defending something even more precious than territory: the

water supplies for what was at the time not only Europe's largest city but also the largest city west of Peking.

This season's survey, led jointly by Alessandra Ricci, of Ankara's Bilkent University, has revealed a remarkable network of underground water channels as well as previously undocumented aqueducts which are more than 100ft high and span entire valleys. These were all part of a supply system that covered a distance of 150 miles and was far more elaborate than that of Rome itself. As an engineering feat, the system must be reckoned one of the wonders of the early medieval world.

One of the most important accomplishments of the Newcastle-Bilkent project may be to rescue so important an historical terrain from obscurity. If the Long Wall has remained largely unexamined until now that is because it was inside what was, up to the

end of the Cold War, a military zone (along Turkey's border with Bulgaria) every bit as sensitive as it was at the time of its building.

One of the few scholars to have visited the walls in recent times was Feridun Dirimtek, the director in the 1950s of the St Sofia Museum in Istanbul, who as a retired Turkish army officer was able to secure permission to explore a restricted area.

The present survey has been more exacting in pioneering methods very different from those normally associated with trench archaeology. Much of the work so far has been done not with spades but with electronic theodolites that download co-ordinates into laptop computers. Software developed at Newcastle then reconstructs the wall as computerised graphics.

What is revealed is a defensive system complete with towers and fortresses that ex-



Much of Constantinople's water-supply network still exists, including the Kursunlugerme aqueduct, "a monumental display of imperial might"

tends as a single continuous structure from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara. In front of the outer face of the wall there were ditches and defensive earthworks that in places still survive.

The archaeologists are also making novel use of low-orbiting satellites to plot the exact

dimensions of their finds via a Ground Positioning System similar to, but more sophisticated than, the navigational equipment on a yacht. That has enabled them to calculate the exact incline of the aqueducts and to hypothesise that the water collected in the Istranca Mountains ran right

into the Valens aqueduct that still stands in the centre of what is now Istanbul.

Like any expensive defence project, the wall had its critics. The Emperor Justinian's official historian, Procopius, criticised the wall as an acknowledgment of the fear of invasion rather than a strate-

gic answer to it. Gibbon, too, described the Long Wall as a misguided attempt to emulate the imperial glories of Rome. This is not a view entirely shared by Mr Crow who describes the Long Wall as a piece of "military hardware" with a respectable shelf-life of nearly 150 years. The wall

have discovered what they confidently believe are the remains of the Hexamilion, a smaller wall in ancient Chersonese, or what is now the Gallipoli peninsula. An army trying to invade Asia Minor would either head for the Bosphorus Strait or cut south to the Hellespont. Either way,

What has been revealed is a complete defensive system

a wall stood in its path. This makes better sense if one considers that the foundations of the Chersonese Wall go back to the fifth century BC and the line it defines was defended in this century by the British during the allied occupa-

tion of Istanbul at the end of the First World War. The Ottomans, too, in 1912 built a version — and no more successful — of a Maginot Line that ran through Catalca, a few miles closer to Istanbul than the Anastasian Wall.

An equally impressive if more puzzling find has been that of an hydraulic network on the "wrong side" of the wall. Although Dirimtek noted the aqueduct at Kursunlugerme outside the northern section of the wall, his description left Signora Ricci unprepared for the sight of a monumental display of imperial might. It is clad in marble and the keystone is decorated with a *chrismon* — a cross within a laurel — a symbol of the newly adopted state religion, Christianity.

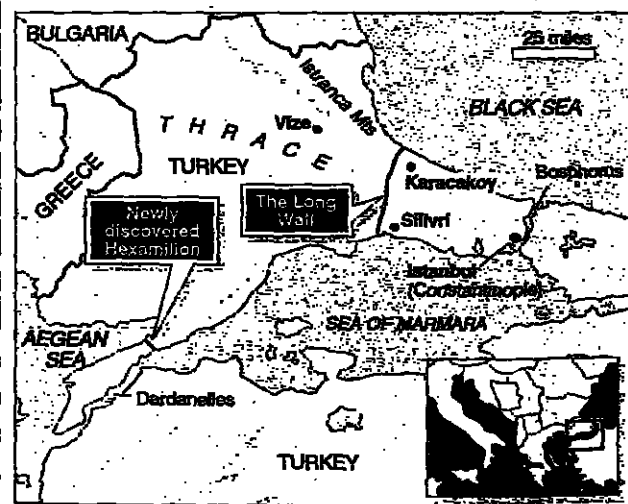
"So important a structure leads you to realise that there was no sharp division between the military and psychological assertion of empire," Signora Ricci says.

The Long Wall has to be looked at with another of the survey's important finds. After two years of hunting in a different part of the country, the Newcastle-Bilkent team

has discovered what they confidently believe are the remains of the Hexamilion, a smaller wall in ancient Chersonese, or what is now the Gallipoli peninsula. An army trying to invade Asia Minor would either head for the Bosphorus Strait or cut south to the Hellespont. Either way,

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Indian readers won by scant coverage

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

INDIA'S news-stands are suddenly crammed with glossy magazines adorned with half-dressed women and articles about sex. The latest arrival is an Indian edition of *Cosmopolitan*, the cover of which pants with the very un-Indian headline: "What men want in women today."

The arrival of *Cosmopolitan* reflects a shift in Indian taste and tolerance: no longer are people satisfied with magazines such as *Femina*, which are obsessed with fashion, make-up and social sophistication rather than sex. The cover of *Cosmopolitan*'s first Indian edition burges into the market with a scantily-clad girl above the headline: "The greatest sexual turn-on."

From Shobha De, the best-selling author whose eroticising novels romp through the sex lives of India's upper classes, we learn about "A smart woman's guide to staying on top". This drive is starting stuff for Indian readers. So is an explicit article about being noisy in bed — "go ahead, purr, moan, be raunchy". And there is this offering: "How to make him wish the night would never end."

The closest Indians have previously come to reading such material is in well-

thumbed copies of foreign girlie magazines smuggled into the country and sold under the counter.

Femina and its ilk mention sex only in the broadest terms, and never the mechanics of it. The traditional place for that kind of discussion is in the multitude of sex advice clinics, usually run by quacks.

The more liberal attitude can be traced to four years ago, when the Government felt compelled to run frank advertisements on state-run television about Aids.

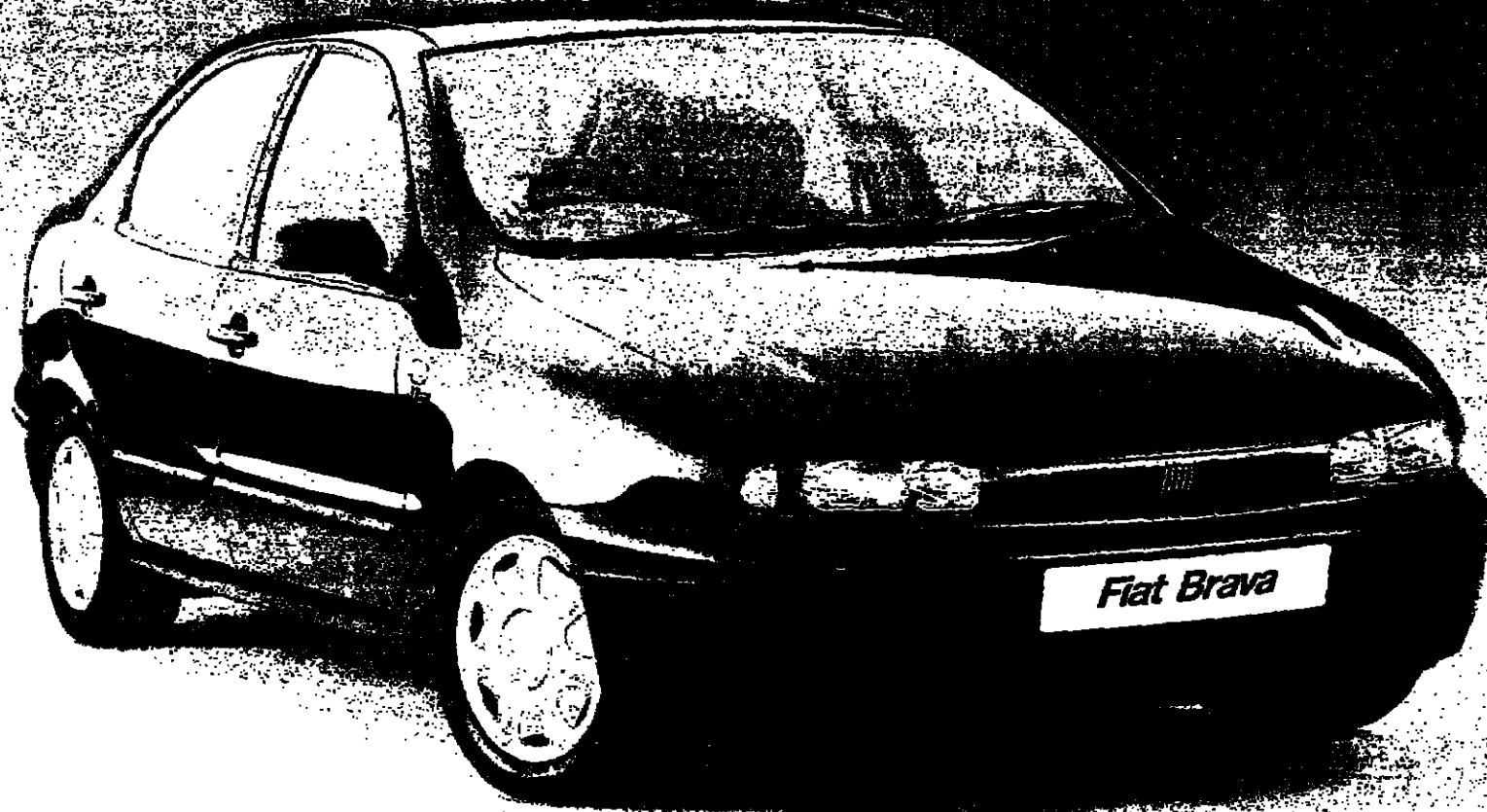
These public-interest commercials were withdrawn after protests, but they made it possible for magazines such as *Femina* to get away with articles about orgasms without bringing the censors through the door.



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Palestinians call for removal of Hebron settlers

FROM ROSS DUNN IN HEBRON

MUSLIM women wept and prayed at the hospital beds of their loved ones, wounded in yesterday's attempted massacre of Palestinians by an Israeli soldier. The sobbing women reached the hospital in Hebron through streets strewn with stones and burning barricades.

One of those keeping vigil was Fousia Atrash, whose twin sons were among the victims. Akram and Abdel Karim, aged 16, were selling vegetables in the Arab market when Noam Friedman started firing at them.

The pair suffered gunshot wounds in their legs and feet. In hospital, they suffered their pain in silence while staff and reporters crowded round them. But their mother could not remain silent.

Asked if Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, should agree to sign a Hebron accord with the Israelis, Mrs Atrash said: "No, no, no. We must refuse this agreement."

She said that all the Jewish settlers in Hebron, about 400 in number, should be removed from the town. "It's a big mistake to let the Jewish settlers be in the city," she said.

Mrs Atrash said this time she would not be satisfied with platitudes from the Israeli Government. Ten members of her clan had been among the 29 Muslim worshippers killed by Baruch Goldstein, the Jewish settler, in Hebron in 1994. Then, she said, the Israeli authorities said that Goldstein was crazy.

"We are waiting for them to say this incident is also crazy,"



she said. Mrs Atrash said it made no difference that Friedman came from outside Hebron.

"There is no difference," she said. "All the soldiers think the same."

She noted that both Goldstein and Friedman had put on their army uniforms before attacking Palestinians.

Fathers also vented their emotions over the shootings. "How will this agreement protect us?" said Talfi Jaber, who sat at the bedside of his son, Hamoud, 31, who was in a critical but stable condition.

Mr Jaber, 64, said he felt more secure when he lived under British rule in Palestine than he did under Israeli military occupation. "The British didn't hurt us," he said.

Majdi Moutash, said he feared the Jewish settlers' hatred of Arabs was being passed from father to son.

The head of a non-government organisation said that another Palestinian boy had been injured after the shooting.

"The kids of the settlers pushed and beat him," he said. "His face and his legs are marked."

Mustafa Natshe, the Mayor

of Hebron, said Palestinians had been expecting an attack for some time. There has been provocation by settlers and many right-wingers have come to Hebron for demonstrations. It was only a matter of time, he added.

Mr Natshe said Friedman had intended to destroy the proposed Hebron accord. "But we must not allow this goal to be realised," he added. "We must learn a lesson from this so that it will not happen again."

Mr Natshe yesterday met Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, who offered medical treatment for the wounded and promised a swift end to the curfew imposed on Hebron after the attack.

A spokesman in Jordan for the militant Islamic group Hamas said the attack proved the futility of Arab-Jewish co-existence. "The crime committed today is what Hamas has warned about... of the impossibility of co-existence between the Zionist occupation and the Palestinian people," the spokesman said.

13 Beirut. Fighting between Muslim guerrillas and Israeli forces and their militia allies in southern Lebanon killed 255 people in 1996, including 27 Israeli troops.

The soldiers' deaths make up the highest annual Israeli death toll on the last active Arab-Israeli frontline in more than a decade.

In 1995, 175 people died in southern Lebanon violence, including 23 Israeli soldiers. A year earlier, 21 Israelis were among 201 people killed there. (Reuters)



Israeli troops attending to one of the Palestinians who was wounded in the Arab marketplace in Hebron yesterday by another uniformed soldier, Noam Friedman, who opened fire on civilians

Portillo to assess Falklands garrison

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

MICHAEL PORTILLO, the Defence Secretary, arrived yesterday in Port Stanley at the start of a four-day visit intended to underline Britain's commitment to the Falklands and to look at the future of the 2,000-strong military garrison there.

His visit comes as Britain and the Falklands are negotiating the costs of running the base, and two weeks before a controversial visit to the Argentinean graveyard by the families of soldiers killed during the 1982 Falklands conflict.

Mr Portillo arrived from Chile, where he spent three days in talks with President Frei and the Defence Ministry and visited a joint British-Chilean artillery factory. In the Falklands he will meet the Governor, Richard Ralph, and visit the three armed service leaders at the Mount Pleasant base. He will also lay a wreath in San Carlos for British soldiers killed in 1982.

Mr Portillo is likely to make much of the Conservatives' commitment to the islands' sovereignty, and may contrast his remarks with those made during a recent visit by Tony Lloyd, Labour foreign affairs spokesman, who spoke of the need for closer relations between the islands and Argentina, causing unease among some Falklanders.

Mr Portillo is expected to underline the Government's rejection of a recent proposal by President Menem of Argentina that his country should share sovereignty over the Falklands with Britain. The Foreign Office brushed aside the remarks before Christmas, saying: "We are not prepared to discuss any change over the Falklands."

Suu Kyi in defiant plea for pressure

Rangoon. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader, predicted progress toward democracy in 1997 and urged the world to step up pressure on the junta.

At a defiant New Year's Eve news conference, she declared: "In politics, it's very difficult to say when something is going to happen. Who would have thought that, in 1989, the political map of Eastern Europe would change so quickly?"

Explosions which killed five people and injured 17, and a series of student protests earlier in December, have marked Burma's most important unrest since the 1988 pro-democracy uprising.

Daw Suu Kyi denied allegations by the junta which has ruled Burma since 1962, of fomenting unrest. "I do not believe in arousing the masses just to create a situation that will be favorable for our organisation," she said. "We want the kind of change that comes because people understand the need for a change and are committed to make it." (AP)

Singapore stability 'at stake in poll'

FROM REUTERS IN SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE'S Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, said his position and the country's stability could be questioned if his party fared badly in today's election, even though it is assured of continued control of the Government.

The ruling People's Action Party (PAP) is guaranteed a majority after the election because 47 of the parliament's 83 seats are not being contested by the opposition.

But on the hustings for the remaining 36 seats, Mr Goh said strong support in the contested areas was crucial to his Government's credibility.

Mr Goh said that if he did not do well, foreigners would conclude his position had weakened. "They would say, who will be the next Prime Minister... would I be challenged internally within the PAP, would I be challenged by others outside the PAP? So they would speculate as to the stability of Singapore."

The PAP has been in power since independence in 1965 and faced no opposition MPs until 1981. In the outgoing

parliament, opposition parties hold just four seats.

The election has seen the introduction of additional multi-member constituencies. A victory in a multi-member constituency could sharply increase opposition representation in parliament.

One such constituency, where the race is believed to be close, is Cheng San, with five seats at stake. The PAP has launched an all-out assault on one Workers' Party candidate in the constituency, Tang Liang Hong. PAP leaders have accused Mr Tang of harbouring communist Chinese and anti-Christian views in a society that witnessed racial riots in the 1960s.

In a speech on Tuesday, Mr Goh made it clear that supporting the opposition could rebound on voters. He said the PAP would monitor results from every voting ward to pinpoint the precincts that supported the opposition and the level of that support. This information would determine which areas received priority for housing upgrading.

Italy pays Gothic homage to creator of Frankenstein

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME



Mary Shelley: neglected

MARY SHELLEY, whose life in Italy has been overshadowed by the enduring fame of Percy Bysshe Shelley, her husband, is to be commemorated in a new museum at Lerici, on the Gulf of Spezia.

The town council has been persuaded to dedicate a castle overlooking the sea to her memory and local feminists want to give it a Gothic atmosphere, reminiscent of her book, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*.

The project has the backing of Balthus Abbe, daughter of Leo Abbe, the MP, and niece of the poet Danny Abbe, who is curator of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome. She is leaving the city after bringing about a remarkable renaissance at the house over the past six years, turning a lost into a "healthy profit".

But the house, which is next to the Spanish Steps and preserved much as it was in the 1820s, is devoted to the male Romantic poets. "This year marks the bicentenary of Mary Shelley's birth," she said. "We have limited space, so I am delighted that Lerici is to honour her."

Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein* in 1818 when she was 21 and had been married to Shelley for two

In *Search of Mary Shelley*, believes Mary has been unjustly neglected. "I suggest that few people actually read the Romantic poets any more... whereas *Frankenstein* has become part of our collective heritage," she said. "The product of Mary Shelley's imagination still stands as a symbol of the technology modern man has created."

After Shelley's death, Mary returned to Kentish Town and survived him by nearly 30 years. She subsequently wrote that the death of "my divine Shelley" had ended an unhappy period at Lerici, but Lucia Solara, head of tourism for La Spezia and "The Gulf of the Poets", insisted that Lerici was a suitably romantic site for a modern memorial to Mary Shelley and her achievements.

The Casa Magni is now a hotel, but Signora Solara said that the 12th-century castle on the headland above would make a suitably atmospheric museum. "We want to create a literary park and castle which will ensure the imagination of a great writer and her extraordinary circle of friends," Signora Solara said. The museum organisers hope to display Mary's letters, manuscripts, and other documents relating to her novels, which also included *The Last Man* and *Valperga*.

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on the dangers of diving into freezing water, the differences between flu and a heavy cold, why you should avoid snuggling up to your pet bird, and the hazards of the local hair salon

Icy waters bring on diving reflex

Christmas and new year swimmers have had more publicity than usual this year as in many seaside towns they had to plough through the snow before plunging into near-freezing water.

Even when a person is expecting it, sudden immersion in cold water has a very marked influence on both the respiratory system and the circulation. Even going under a cold shower produces a sharp indrawing of the breath, and similar changes affect the cardio-vascular system. Plunging the limb of a patient with angina into cold water while carrying out an ECG tracing produces the characteristic changes of coronary arterial disease. Mid-winter Serpentine bathers should either be certain that they are free of heart disease, or leave charity fundraising to somebody else.

Many swimmers point before they dive into cold water in the belief that by hyperventilating they will be able to hold their breath longer once in the river. The practice is not without hazard as it tends to slow the heart to the point where the swimmer may lapse into unconsciousness, and later death, if not rapidly revived. The slowing of the heart is induced by changes in the carbon dioxide blood levels, which are associated with hyperventilation.

Sudden immersion when someone is not expecting it can be even more devastating and is one of the common causes of dry drowning. Dry drowning is the condition in which it is found that people who have been recovered from the water have no excess fluid in their lungs even though their immersion was fatal. The late Dr Gavin Thurston, who was for many years the coroner for central

London, said the majority of the people whose inquest he conducted after they had died from falling in the Thames had no water in their lungs. Death in these cases of sudden drowning is a result of the sudden cooling which acts as a shock to the heart and precipitates ventricular fibrillation, a disordered rhythm of the heart which is incompatible with life.

Despite the tragic deaths of William and Jill Willis, the Essex dog lovers who gave their lives in an attempt to save their Labrador, people can survive surprisingly long periods in very cold water and are sometimes revived when all signs of life are apparently absent. These survivors owe their lives to the mammalian diving reflex.

The diving reflex, which is better exhibited by animals more accustomed to swimming in icy water, involves the redirection of the oxygenated blood away from the limbs and the gastro-intestinal tract to the essential organs such as the heart and brain. Patients, who have been in cold water for an hour or two and have had rectal temperatures of below 20°C, have survived unscathed.

The nearer the water is to freezing, the more likely it is the reflex will be induced, fortunately the body's tissues also need less oxygen to survive when they are thoroughly chilled, which gives rescuers a better chance of resuscitating the victims than they would have had had the accident happened in a warmer climate. The diving reflex is more efficient in children than in adults, as is exemplified by the case a year or two ago of a toddler who was swept a mile or two down the river in Norfolk before being spotted drifting in the water. He was rescued, resuscitated and made a full recovery.



Mid-winter Serpentine bathers should either be certain that they are free of heart disease, or leave charity fundraising to others

The treatment of the patient who has suffered hypothermia from near drowning is complex but the most important problem is to keep him or her alive in the first half hour after the rescue, for this is the time at which the majority of deaths occur. Deaths at the scene of the rescue usually happen because of ventricular fibrillation.

Patients sometimes recover consciousness at the scene of the accident only to die later as a result of the damage caused by the low blood levels of oxygen which had been circulating. In hospital respiratory support, constant ECG monitoring with defibrillation when needed, the correction of the acidosis and abnormalities in the blood electrolytes, and adequate blood oxygenation are all needed.

The low blood oxygen levels the patient suffered may have caused irreversible brain damage and sometimes those who have been submerged for any length of time may also sustain damage to the nerve supply of the blood vessels leading to the limbs and in consequence may have residual muscle wasting and subsequent limb contractures.

The unhappy returns of flu

There is still doubt that the present outbreak of upper respiratory tract infections is the start of a genuine flu epidemic, or merely part of the usual seasonal increase in viral infections. At Christmas time there is more party-going, shops are crowded and this year people have become cold and damp because of the freezing weather. The holiday period has provided the ideal environment for viruses to spread and to infect hosts whose resistance has been lowered.

So far as the patient is concerned the difference between flu and a heavy cold is one of degree, and its symptoms therefore are subject to interpretation by the sufferer. Some people are convinced that they never catch a cold, but always flu. Other sufferers, more emotionally robust and brought up in the tradition of grin and bear it, may have a headache, muscle pains, backache, shivering, a dry cough and high temperature — the typical symptoms of flu — and yet protest that they only have a cold. This still upper lip approach to winter infections is potentially dangerous both to colleagues, who would rather not catch them, and to the patient.

Flu should always be nursed at home. In an uncomplicated case no more than a high fluid intake, aspirin for the adults, paracetamol for children, cough mixture, rest and warmth are needed. But if there is any sign that the patient has pneumonia (increasing breathlessness, a

blue tinge to their complexion, or bloodstained spit) or other signs of secondary infection a doctor should be called immediately. If a flu victim belongs to one of the high risk groups — the very young, the over-65s or those with chronic lung, heart, diabetes or kidney conditions — medical advice should also be sought. Patients taking immuno-suppressant drugs, including steroids, or who have malignancies will need skilled attention.

There are three types of influenza virus, A, B and C. The C virus is the mildest and often causes symptoms which are no worse than a cold. The current virus emptying hospitals of nurses while filling them with cases of pneumonia is of the A variety. Influenza A is less stable than B and usually causes more severe symptoms. The nature of influenza A regularly undergoes shifts, major changes in the virus, or drifts, minor changes. After a shift the immunity of the population to the new-style virus is low and a severe epidemic may follow. The latest figures suggest that the incidents of flu are still well below the 4 per 100,000 of the population needed before an epidemic can be declared. The situation can, however, change rapidly. In the late Sixties a flu epidemic suddenly erupted over the Christmas period; the flu virus like the other respiratory viruses spread by droplet infection, can soon infect a community enjoying the social life of the winter holiday.

NICK CORNISH



Coughs and sneezes are still likely to spread diseases

Pioneer of Parkinson's drug dies

THE 100,000 people in Britain who suffer from Parkinson's disease should be giving thanks for the life of Dr Walter Birkmayer, the Austrian doctor whose work led to the introduction of the Levodopa drugs for the treatment of the disease. Dr Birkmayer died this week.

The Levodopa drugs are still the treatment of choice in most cases of established Parkinson's disease once it has become severe enough to interfere with normal life either at home or in the office.

Levodopa helps such symptoms as rigidity, loss of balance and other postural problems, slowness of movement and even the characteristic slow tremor.

At the time of their introduction the Levodopa drugs seemed miraculous, so great was their improvement on anything that had been used before, but they do have limitations and sometimes become less effective as the disease progresses. They can also be less useful in the very elderly. Levodopa drugs all have side effects: other drugs are increasingly being found which can minimise these but, as in all medicine, a balance has to be struck between the benefits of the drugs and the disability occasioned by its side effects.

Feathered friends can make you ill

AT bedtime 11-year-old Megan Bryant of Cheltenham spurns a teddy bear and cuddles up to her parrot.

The medical jury is still out on whether sharing a bedroom, let alone a bed, with a caged bird predisposes one to lung cancer. Early surveys suggested a link between this tumour and bird fanciers who had a cage in their bedroom, but recent American studies have cast doubts on this.

Psittacosis, however, remains a potential hazard to anyone looking after pet birds, whether they are of the parrot family, pigeons or even chickens. And the closer the contact with the bird the more likely the person is to become infected. The responsible organism is *Chlamydia psittaci* and infection follows inhalation of small dried dusty particles of the birds' droppings: blood tests on people who look after such birds show that many fanciers have had sub-clinical infections. Patients who become infected with psittacosis may develop an atypical pneumonia, with a high temperature, joint pains and flu-like symptoms; conversely they may have few chest signs despite other signs of a generalised infection which in these cases is often coupled with an enlarged liver and spleen. A long course of an appropriate antibiotic would clear the infection.

Hot and bothered

LIFE under the hooded dryers in a hairdressing salon has long been the subject of cartoonists but only recently has anyone investigated its effect on the cerebral circulation in elderly women.

The interest of the staff of the Accident and Emergency Department at Stockport Infirmary was aroused when ten women were admitted over a ten-month period after collapsing in local salons. The doctors asked 20 local salons to report when women fainted under a dryer. Four said that they had such cases once or twice a year. Typically the woman feels sweaty, sick and faint, before losing consciousness. Recovery is uneventful.

The result of the research is reported in the *British Journal of Clinical Practice*. Older doctors will remember that similar trouble used to be experienced by barbers when they shaved elderly men with a cut-throat razor. The collapse was attributed to the way the head had been awkwardly thrust forward, or backward, while shaving with the result that the position of the neck had restricted the blood flow through thickened arteries.

The Stockport doctors also suggested that the nervous control of the circulation in elderly women may be relatively inefficient and may react slowly to the environment under the hairdryer, and that the spot in the neck which controls blood pressure may conversely be hypersensitive.



The perils of the dryer

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Stoker and his real-life Dracula

In the centenary year of *Dracula*'s publication, Daniel Farson reflects on the strange relationship between his great-uncle Bram Stoker and the actor-manager Sir Henry Irving

Lovers of *Dracula* have two reasons to celebrate in 1997. Not only does the novel's centenary fall this year, but it is also the 150th anniversary of the birth of Bram Stoker, the least-known author of one of the best-known books ever written.

The more I have learnt about Bram, the greater my compassion for the man who was my great-uncle — the brother of my grandfather, Tom. Hero-worshipping others, married to a cold-beauty who had been engaged to Oscar Wilde, Stoker spent a lifetime in the wings, taken for granted by those he applauded so loyally, especially the actor Sir Henry Irving, who devoted his life. Dying in 1912, broke and broken, he had no inkling that he had created one of the myths of the 20th century, which has grown into an industry.

When I was a boy I read a yellow-bound first edition of *Dracula*, the title in scarlet letters, inscribed by Bram Stoker to my grandfather. I was so absorbed on top of a bus that the smiling conductor warned me I might have nightmares. She may not have read the novel but she knew all about it.

Everyone knows of *Dracula*, few of Stoker; let me share some family secrets. The question invariably asked is: how did Stoker, an otherwise indifferent author of 17 books, gain the inspiration for his single masterpiece? Why was he fascinated by vampires?

His interest in the "un-dead" began at an early age during a childhood illness which confined him to his room for the first seven years of his life. His mother, Charlotte, told him bedtime stories of the cholera epidemic that reached Ireland in 1832, where she lived with her parents in Sligo. Her family barricaded themselves inside their fumigated home while neighbours were carried away and looters robbed the empty houses.

My grandmother, Edith Stoker, remembered Charlotte as a formidable woman who saw the hand of a looter reaching through a skylight on one of the last, terrible days. Seizing an axe, she hacked it off with one tremendous blow. She was 24.

His unexplained childhood illness miraculously cured, Bram had grown into a huge, red-bearded athlete by the time he entered Trinity College, Dublin. If ever a man had conflicting personalities it was Bram. He had the courage to leap into the Thames to save a drowning man, for which he received the Royal Humane Society's medal for gallantry.

He was also acutely sensitive, championing Walt Whitman, who was condemned by the Trinity college hearties as "morally offensive". Reading his poems under a tree, Bram recorded: "From that

hour I became a lover of Walt Whitman." He wrote him a long letter, never posted, which was close to a declaration of mutual sympathy for everything the poet stood for, including the special rapport between men.

Following his father Abraham, after whom he was named, Bram entered the Irish Civil Service and relieved the tedium by writing a horror serial for the *Shamrock* with a character called the Phantom Fiend. The crucial turning-point came with his job as unpaid dramatic critic for the *Dublin Daily Mail* and his encounter with Henry Irving. The actor was nine years older and Bram, with his curious need to find a hero, reacted like a love-struck girl at their meeting.

Reviewing Irving's *Hamlet*, Stoker wrote: "In his fits of passion there is a realism that no one but a

man on the gala first night. Afterwards, Bram and Irving entertained in their private Beefsteak Room at the back of the theatre. It was here that he met Arminius Vambery, a Hungarian by birth and one of those remarkable adventurers in the Great Game who disguised themselves as devils to spy out the land in Central Asia. It was Vambery who told Stoker of the vampiric legends so rife in Transylvania.

How did Stoker create the character of Count Dracula? Christopher Lee, arguably the finest *Dracula* of all, identifies the character's fascination: "He is a superman with an erotic appeal to women, who find him totally alluring. He is everything people would like to be. Men are attracted because of the irresistible power he wields. For women, there is the complete abandonment to the power of a man." Irving, of course, was such a superman for Stoker, and Lee believes that he provided Stoker with the inspiration for his extraordinary hero.

Stoker opened his novel in Bistritz, Transylvania, with the riveting scene in which Jonathan Harker is warned by the landlady of the Golden Krone not to leave, as it is Walpurgis Night when "all the evil things in the world have full sway".

When I visited Bistritz, I was woken by the sound of hammering and looked onto a courtyard to see a carpenter assembling a coffin. The Borgo Pass was just as Bram described it, mists and all: "The road was cut through the pine woods that seemed in the darkness to be closing down upon us, great masses of greyness, produced a peculiarly weird and solemn effect." What makes this so remarkable is that Bram never set foot in Transylvania. All he gleaned came from an early Baedeker guide and an exhibition of photographs in London. The rest was his imagination.

When the novel was published in 1897, the reception was mixed. The *Daily Mail* hailed it as "this weird, powerful and horrible story", but the *Athenaeum* was scornful: "It reads like a more serious of grotesque and incredible events." His mother was the most sagacious: "My dear, it is splendid. No book since Mrs Shelley's *Frankenstein* has come near yours in originality or terror. In its terrible excitement it should make a widespread reputation and much money for you." Prophetic words — but though he wrote another ten books, he received neither fame nor fortune in his lifetime. The first printing was only 3,000 copies, and there were no reprints. It was the film starring Bela Lugosi that brought success and countless subsequent editions.

Bram continued to work for Irving, with the bonus that their



Irresistible allure: the actor Christopher Lee, above, believes Dracula to be an erotic superman, fulfilling the fantasies of both men and women

American tours introduced him to his idol, Walt Whitman, but Irving was hopeless at business and Stoker unable to control him. The Fates take pleasure in changing sides and after so much glory it was time to pay, Irving fell after the opening night of *Richard III* and Bernard Shaw's review hinted at drunkenness. Bram had to put up the notice he dreaded — "The management regrets..."

Money was needed desperately and every setback meant strain for Stoker. As the actress Ellen Terry noted: "For years Irving has accepted favours, obligations through Bram Stoker. Never will he acknowledge them himself." Now Irving betrayed him by accepting

an offer from another company. Always a gambler, Irving lost and found it impossible to admit his mistake. He used Stoker badly, yet I came across an envelope with a message scrawled in Irving's seismicographic hand which was indecipherable except for: "You above all men whom I hold dear."

Stoker accompanied Irving on his farewell tour of the provinces. After a performance in Bradford, Irving did something unusual between two men who met each other daily. He held out his hand: "Muffle up your throat, old chap. Take care of yourself. God bless you!" An hour later, Stoker was summoned from his lodgings to find Irving dead on the floor, his

valet in tears beside him. After carrying his body upstairs, duty called as it had for 24 years and he sent out telegrams to inform the world.

A year later Bram suffered a slight stroke, which left him with a limp and damaged his eyesight. Two million pounds had passed through his hands when he managed the Lyceum, but now he was broke. He became increasingly eccentric taking my mother to a royal procession when she was 13 he startled the crowd by handing round oranges from a paper bag. At the end of his life, in 1912, Bram returned to Cruden Bay, north of Aberdeen, where he wrote so much of *Dracula*. He could not afford a hotel but rented a cottage. He must have thought himself a failure. Never had he received the recognition he deserved — not even a degree from his old college in Dublin, which honoured Irving and even Vambery.

I should like to imagine that as he limped across Cruden sands with his stout walking-stick, he remembered Count Dracula's snarling cry as he turns on his pursuers in Piccadilly: "You think you have left me without a place to rest, but I have more. My revenge is just begun. I spread it over the centuries and time is on my side."

With the arrival of *Dracula*'s centenary, this should be Stoker's year as well.



Sir Henry Irving, left, and his "victim" Bram Stoker

genius can ever effect." Flattered, Irving invited him to dinner at his hotel and recited Hood's melodramatic poem *The Dream of Eugene Aram* with such mesmeric power that Stoker was close to hysterical collapse. Irving staggered into his bedroom and emerged with a signed photograph for "My dear friend Stoker. God Bless You! God Bless You! Henry Irving. Dublin, December 3, 1876".

In those moments of our mutual emotion," wrote Bram years later, "he too had found a friend and knew his soul had looked into soul. From that hour began a friendship as profound, as close, as lasting as can be between two men."

When Irving bought the Lyceum Theatre two years later, he telegraphed Bram asking him to be his acting manager. Bram, accepted without hesitation, resigning from the secure drudgery of the Civil Service. Five days before joining Irving in Birmingham, on December 4, 1878, Bram married my great-aunt, Florence Balcombe, a beauty as chilly as marble with whom Oscar Wilde had previously been in love. Bram, with his reverence for the fair sex, placed her on a pedestal where she was happy to stay out of reach.

The handsome, red-bearded, Stoker became a familiar figure as he welcomed the greatest people of the time at the top of the Lyceum

Kathryn Knight prepares for a hot date

How I set my world on fire

AFTER months of worrying over my single status, my flatmates recently came up with a solution. The friend of a friend, he was to be the answer to my prayers.

He was a stockbroker (decent wage packet), who enjoyed the theatre (suggestion of cultural leanings). He had dark hair and green eyes. "You'll love him," they promised. Initially dubious, I became first interested, then unashamedly excited.

The blind date and I had arranged dinner at a *deux* on a Friday night. I saw myself waiting a cigarette with practised mystique and puffing seductively over my salad. Friday arrived, and I was barely able to contain myself. We were to meet at a bar before going on to dinner.

The inauspicious sign that launched the evening should have served as a warning of worse to come. At 7pm, I glided casually towards the Times newsdesk to take my leave. A brief chat about my evening ascertained that the entire desk had a rendezvous at the very same bar at the very same time. With 25 minutes left until showtime, there was no alternative but to try to intercept my man.

A frantic combination of taxi, tube and legwork delivered me to the bar at 7.35pm. The exertion had reduced my cheeks to a sickly yellow. I had casually extracted a cigarette from the packet and was about to strike an elegant match when the box fell on the floor. As I bent to rescue it,



Cary Grant lights up romance — the Hollywood way

my head made contact with the candle on the table. The soft flame flickered over my hair and transformed it into something not unlike *Towering Inferno*.

"Christ," shrieked the date, baring his hand against my forehead in an attempt to put me out. Unsure whether I was bald and/or char-grilled, I made a dash to the ladies for a hasty restoration job. How do you re-enter a room with any dignity under such circumstances? I took the steps in as casual a fashion as I could muster. But it seemed the man of my dreams had undergone a strange change of heart. Muttering something along the lines of "already involved, it'd be great to meet up as friends," he called for the bill within minutes — and we exited into the cold London night and separate taxis. I haven't heard from him since.

THINGS were looking up. The lighting was as planned, the food was good. More to the point, he was looking good. By the main course I was imagining myself in yards of bridal chiffon — when a single movement brought an end to the dream. I had casually extracted a cigarette from the packet and was about to strike an elegant match when the box fell on the floor. As I bent to rescue it,

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Great lives well told

Magnus Linklater on the best four biographies of last year

Shall we see greatness in 1997? Not just a man or woman of the year, but someone memorable enough to stand the test of time, to qualify, let's say, for a biography, written ten, 100 or even 400 years after their death. The thought is prompted, not by the controversy over the *Today* award, but by the announcement of this year's Whitbread Biography of the Year. The shortlist runs from a life of Thomas Cranmer (died 1556) to Samuel Beckett (died 1989), via Queen Caroline (1821) and George Eliot (1880). This disparate collection emerged from a far longer list of 65 books, all published in 1996, and as one of the exhausted judges who took part in a three-hour reading marathon, I can testify to one thing at least: there is no such thing as a short biography.

There is also no such thing as an easy test of what constitutes a great life. In each book that caught the attention of the judges, it was the skill and insight of the biographer that proved at least as important as the significance of the subject. No one would claim that Caroline of Brunswick and the scandals that marked her turbulent marriage in George IV could be weighed on the same scale of history as the achievements of Archbishop Cranmer, who helped to forge the Reformation and was martyred for his faith. Nor can one guarantee that future generations will judge *Krapp's Last Tape* with the same measure of enthusiasm as we now accord *The Mill on the Floss*.

But in each case the author has wrought something of moment from the various lives, turning biography into history. This is as it should be. Our view of the past has always been deeply influenced by the chroniclers of famous people. Emerson once wrote: "There is properly no history; only biography." And Disraeli, his exact contemporary, felt the same. "Read no history; nothing but biography, for that is life without theory," he wrote. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Lockhart's of Walter Scott, Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, or more recently, Michael Holroyd on Strachey himself, or Richard Ellman on Oscar Wilde, have all presented a picture whose definition is so sharp that it has formed the opinion of a generation, while telling us more of the social history of the period than any number of historical textbooks.

What emerges may not be entirely objective, because no good biographer is ever fully detached from his subject. The process of delving deep into the passionate nature of a human being is ultimately more rewarding than the precise circumstance of his birth, death, marriage or doctoral thesis, and attempting to maintain the balance between both rarely succeeds. "How on earth does one explain mad-

ness and love in sober prose with dates attached?" cried Virginia Woolf in despair as she attempted to complete her life of Roger Fry. How is biography even possible, she went on to ask. How is one to know that the really significant events in a person's life have not gone unwritten and unrecorded?

The answer is that one cannot. And sometimes the evidence to go on is so slight that it is like reconstructing a tyrannosaurus from a single fossilised claw. Diarmuid McCullough, in the introduction to his life of Cranmer, says that in more than 300 letters of Cranmer, there is only one mention of his wife and children. Yet by the end, what reaches us across 400 years is the human dimension of the subject, the frailty of a man confronted with the terror of martyrdom and his courage at the moment of death.

Defiance would be a more appropriate way of describing the quality that emerges from Flora Fraser's biography of Queen Caroline, whose story parallels that of our own dear Princess of Wales so closely that one has to pinch oneself occasionally to remember that one is reading about the early 19th century rather than something from Nigel Dempster's gossip column. A life of relentless royal bickering is redeemed by the sheer resilience of a woman thrown into a loveless marriage and subjected to endless humiliation by an Establishment intent on destroying her.

One quality runs through all these books — courage

Nothing could be further from the deeply serious and troubled life of George Eliot, whom Rosemary Ashton describes as the most unconventional woman of the Victorian age. Despite the fact that she had rejected her religion and was living in sin, "her natural feeling was a longing to agree as far as possible". Assailed by guilt, and miserable when rejected by conventional society, she was nevertheless unable to ignore the driving forces of her own nature. She became, as Professor Ashton puts it, an "internal exile", just as Samuel Beckett, for most of his life, was an exile of another kind, straddling the cultures of France and his native Ireland, never quite a part of either, yet always his own man. James Knowlson recounts how Beckett joined the resistance as much because of his disgust for Nazi anti-Semitism as any patriotic feelings towards his adopted country.

Looking back on the books we chose, I realise that one quality runs through all four. It is courage — not just the courage to confront physical danger, but to defy convention, to stick to personal beliefs, to remain true to one's nature, to ignore the easy route of conformity. Whether these alone amount to greatness I doubt. But at a time when principle in public life is all too often sacrificed in the interests of popularity, they make a pretty good start.

With peace a still distant dream, Paul Bew analyses the Unionist endgame in this Parliament

Dancing to the Orange flute

Will the Ulster Unionists hasten the downfall of the John Major Government? There are some Ulster Unionist MPs — notably John Taylor, the deputy leader, and Ken Maginnis, the Fernmanagh and S Tyrone MP — who give the impression of being keen to do just that. Sour personal relations with leading members of the Government play a key role here but, more important, is the feeling that the Unionists should gain as much credit as possible with an incoming Blair government. Tony Blair, after all, has done much to reduce Unionist apprehension of a Labour victory.

On the eve of the 1992 general election, polls showed a widespread and intense fear of a Labour government within the Unionist community in Northern Ireland. These fears are neither as widespread nor intense today. The reason is clear enough. In February 1992, Neil Kinnock went to the Irish Embassy in London to confirm his party's commitment to Irish unity "in the longer term".

Not surprisingly, the Labour approach excited and pleased republicans. Jim Gibney, the Sinn Féin spokesman, asked Mr Kinnock, if elected to Downing Street, to "honour the letter and spirit of your policy on Ireland. We are willing to help you unite our country; don't falter in the face of such a historic demand."

It emerged later that a radical

Labour policy review had decided to offer Dublin power, as opposed to the current high level of consultation, in Northern Ireland.

The signals being sent five years later are rather different. This is partly a tribute to the modernising spirit of new Labour but it is, above all, a tribute to the change in political discourse effected by the Downing Street declaration of December 1993 and the framework documents of 1995. Unionists dislike many aspects of these documents — signed by the British and Irish Governments — but one thing is clear: they rule out a role for Britain as a persuader for Irish unity. They also lay great emphasis on the need for the agreement of the local parties. New Labour's absolutely wholehearted embrace of the Downing Street declaration logically implies the end of a policy which even hints that Labour might be a persuader for Irish unity.

So, the argument runs, why should

David Trimble's nine Ulster Unionist MPs not make common cause with Labour in the lobby? In fact, it is not likely to happen. There are still, despite everything, warm ties between some senior Tories and Ulster Unionists. Two of Mr Trimble's parliamentary colleagues, Sir James Molyneux and Willie Ross, were elected in 1970 as Conservative and Unionist MPs. Both are emotionally pro-Tory; it is difficult to see them bringing down the Government. The very size of Labour's poll lead counsels the Ulster Unionists to wait for a moment, which is likely to bring about a Government with a smaller majority. The more that John Hume and Gerry Adams call for an early election, the more Unionists are likely to stay their hand. They no longer expect significant policy movements by this Government either to their advantage or disadvantage; but there is at the margins a certain amount of business to be done.

Mr Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, has a lot riding on the next Westminster election. The Forum election results in Northern Ireland in May 1995, which left his party with 30 seats against the Paisleyite Democratic Unionist Party's 24 seats, was not a great personal triumph. The growing inter-communal bitterness in the province since the end of the IRA ceasefire may be working to the DUP's advantage. Mr Trimble will, however, still hope to gain at least one seat. His recent deal with Sir James Goldsmith should be seen partly in this context. Goldsmith's financial generosity should, at least, assist a better presentation of the Ulster Unionist case in the next few months. Nevertheless, it has left a legacy of irritation within Mr Trimble's own party: even intense Euro-sceptics complain about lack of consultation. Mr Trimble's honeymoon as leader is definitely over. Yet it is worth noting that for all his reputation as an errand

ic hardliner, he has skillfully not foreclosed absolutely on the possibility of a negotiated settlement of the Ulster crisis.

But, of course, much here depends on the dialectic of republican-loyalist violence and — while there are clearly restraining forces at work on both sides — the omens here are not good. Mr Adams seems to be determined to avoid any form of republican split at any price, even though the balance of forces within the republican movement no longer sustains the strategy embodied in the 1994-95 peace process. More importantly, Mr Adams may have missed the moment for the one decisive move which could have transformed the situation. This is not the acceptance of the principle that majority consent in Northern Ireland is required before there can be Irish unity — that was always asking the republican movement for too much — but a republican acceptance that war would no longer be waged against this principle.

In more optimistic times a few months ago, Dr Marjorie Mowlam, Labour's spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, in an effort to assist the peace process, argued that the status quo "was not an option". It is beginning to look as if the status quo — direct rule with a green tinge — is the only option.

Professor Paul Bew is Parnell Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge

Too late for the Comeback Kid?

John Major's performance has improved.

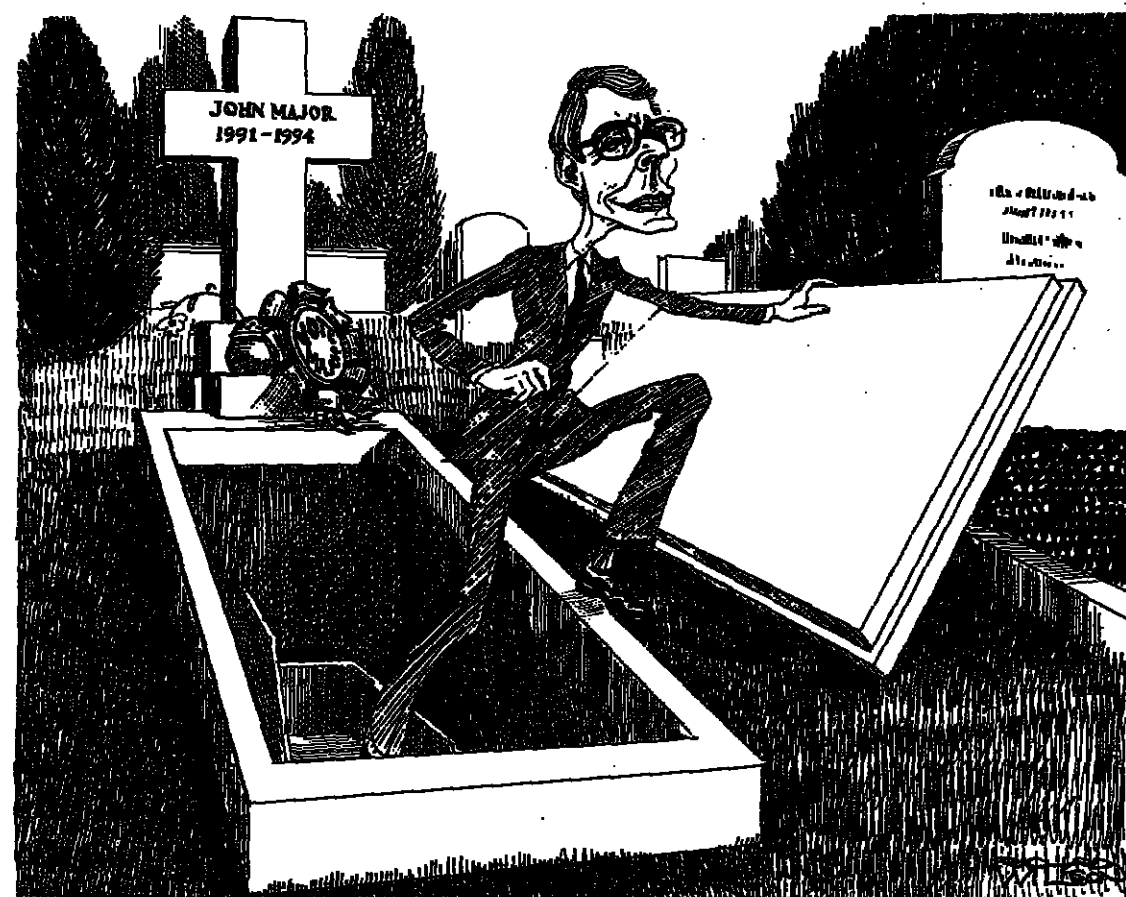
But it may not be enough to win

There is a case to be made for John Major. I am one of those commentators who has been a disillusioned supporter of his. I wanted him to become Prime Minister after, but only after, Margaret Thatcher had been rejected. I became disillusioned by the errors of his first three years in government, particularly by the loss of control of public expenditure, by the mishandling of the recession, by the commitment to an unsustainable rate for sterling in the exchange-rate mechanism, by the signing of the Maastricht treaty and his brutal whipping through a reluctant Parliament. By 1993 I had come to regard him as a disappointing Prime Minister.

The case for Mr Major now rests on the past three years. They have seen a period of economic recovery, better control of expenditure and a Cabinet shift on Europe. If one rules a line at January 1994, and judges him as Prime Minister on his performance after that, his record undeniably looks much better. "Yes, we made a mess of it. Now we're getting it right" may not be much of an election slogan, but it would have some credibility.

If one thinks that his performance was acceptable in the first three years and excellent in the next three — and many Conservatives do think that — there will be no problem in voting for him at the general election. If one thinks that his performance was disappointing in his first three years, but acceptable in the second three, there is still evidence of a learning curve. Prime Ministers have to be trained on the job. We now have an experienced Prime Minister, whom everyone acknowledges to be an honest and likeable man. Why should the electors switch to Tony Blair, who will also learn by making mistakes, some of which could well be as serious as those Mr Major made in 1991 and 1992?

In the election campaign, Mr Major will need to persuade the electorate that this learning curve can continue upwards. If voters think he will be a successful Prime Minister in the future, they may vote to re-elect him, whichever view they take of his past performance. Three election issues are already prominent in the



William Rees-Mogg

public mind. The first, which could be an insuperable obstacle however well Mr Major campaigns, is that it is "time for a change". Many Conservative voters themselves accept the force of this argument. After four Parliaments and 18 years, it would be good for democracy to have a Labour government.

This argument is reinforced by the fact that no one under 40 has now voted in a general election which actually produced a Labour government. The Wilson and Callaghan governments left a sour taste in the mouth, but not in the mouths of those who were children when Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister.

One aspect of this argument will not swing many votes, but it is worrying. I do not think that Mr Blair could survive defeat. I think that old Labour would turn on him, his people and his ideas. That would mean a Labour Party split in 2002, or a Labour government that would try to undo most of the sensible things that have been done since 1979. Yet people will not be voting for the benefit of prosperity. If voters consider that the leadership of Mr Major and the policies of the Conservative Party will be best for themselves and for the country in the last years of the 1990s, they will give the Conservatives another turn in office.

Neville Chamberlain, or William Gladstone or the younger Pitt. He is a solidly responsible performer with remarkably little reforming zeal — a sound but uninspired Chancellor. On the other hand, the Labour description of Britain's recent economic performance is wholly incredible. At this stage of the cycle, at least, Britain has one of the best economic performances in Europe, which one would not exchange for the German, French, Italian or Spanish performances, with their high costs, high taxes and high unemployment.

Europe really does illustrate the learning curve of Prime Ministers. Mrs Thatcher herself, tough-minded as she was, took time to recognise the realities of Europe. Mr Major came into office after Mrs Thatcher had been turned out, on the European issue, and believed that an understanding with Germany could take Britain to the heart of Europe. It did no such thing. Mr Blair does not have as many Euro-illusions as Gordon Brown, but a Labour government would probably be a softer option for the European federalists, as Klaus Kinkel expects. My own view is that Mr Blair would become more realistic about Europe within months, but those would be dangerous months, just as Mr Major's first months were.

So far, the case for Mr Major looks reasonably solid. Whatever view one takes of his early performance, he is now an experienced and prudent Prime Minister, if no visionary. The time-for-a-change argument is partly for the benefit of posterity; what the electorate wants is another five years of jobs and prosperity. The economy is improving. The Conservatives are the party of national interest rather than appeasement on European issues. There is quite a good fit between these arguments and the current views of the electorate. On top of this, Mr Major's image had become an asset. Other Prime Ministers have had brighter plumage, but he has a genuine affinity with the British elector.

There seem to be three problems. Two are the big social services, health and education. Both are underfunded, health to the point of breakdown. The reluctance of the electorate to pay more taxes means that there is no money to fund them more adequately.

At some point the logic of this will probably force politicians to move to plural funding, expanding the private sector in both health and education, through charitable support, insurance, and personal contributions. More than half of all taxpayers could afford to contribute more towards the services as they use them, and a plurally funded system could provide the better services that people demand. No one wants underpaid professors or over-sized classes. No one wants to die on a trolley in a hospital corridor.

British politics is not yet ready for the privatisation of health and education which may become inevitable in the first decade of the next century. The Conservatives are not foolish enough to propose something still so unacceptable. The public may believe that Labour can solve the conundrum of more money for health and education without raising taxes. They know the Conservatives cannot.

The final challenge to Mr Major's electoral prospect is Mr Blair. He has done what Richard Nixon achieved with his southern strategy. He has created a new coalition; he has managed to hold on to old Labour while attracting "progressive" people of all parties and none. Even 25 years ago, polls showed that a coalition of the progressive centre would have a large majority. David Owen came close to achieving that in the 1980s. But his Liberal base was too narrow, and perhaps too goofy.

Tony Blair has the solid Labour base, which is at least twice as large, and he has certainly captured the floating progressives. The new Labour coalition of the progressive centre may well have a natural majority, whatever John Major now does.

More ritz



The Sultan of Brunei and his wives favouring St Moritz

THE PRINCE of Wales may have chosen Klosters with Tiggy and Tara again this year. Roger Moore may remain loyal to Gstaad — but the Sultan of Brunei favours St Moritz as his winter playground. The world's richest man has just rented the former Shah of Iran's old villa in the glitzy resort, where real fur and designer salopettes are *de rigueur*. The head of the tiny but fabulously rich petroleum kingdom is spending a phenomenal sum refurbishing the villa which was built at the beginning of the century and bought by the Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, in 1967. Hardly your average chalet, the

19-room mountain retreat was rented by the Italian media magnate Silvio Berlusconi for 11 years. Urs Schwarzenbach, the Swiss financier, a friend of the Sultan, later bought the property for 19 million francs (about £8 million).

Both the Sultan's wives have inspected the premises and given their approval and Schwarzenbach has now let the house for an undisclosed price to the 50-year-old head of state who plans to make it another of his lavish holiday homes. Expect to see the Sultan and his sultanas swooping down the slopes in matching, his hers and theirs ski outfits.

● The Ealing-based record company Black Hat Records is proudly publicising a new album by a group called Loser. This would seem to be an apposite title. The information volunteered is that one member's previous musical experience extends to his once having been hired to mime with Donny Osmond on a European tour and that another member of the band's musical background embraces only "watching Top of the Pops".

Snowed under

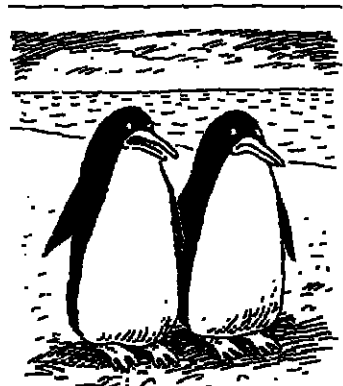
SOUNDS of Mrs Mop revving up her vacuum cleaner backstage at Sadler's Wells (now based at the Peacock Theatre) in preparation for the arrival of Slava Polunin's *Snow* show later this month. The high point of Polunin's surreal performance is an artificial snow storm that leaves the audience knee-deep in thousands of tiny scraps of paper. Everyone agrees the effect is magical, except of course the unfortunate who spends three hours sweeping out the stalls daily.

Game for it

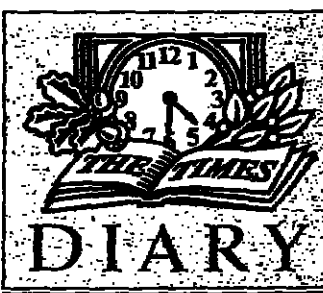
PUNDITS will be playing a new board game this year. General

Election, invented by Bryan Green — a gentleman whose regular occupation is making drystone walls — is about to be launched. Players move backwards and forwards until the first player past the post is declared Prime Minister.

Square 46 reads: "You have to sack your glitz and gloss over mid-way through the campaign", a reference to the turbulent egos in political advertising. Square 25 reads: "The tabloid press prints revelations and allegations about the private lives of other party lead-



"Portillo? Sounds a bit too Argentinian for comfort"



ers. Move other party leaders back two spaces." Green has sent a complimentary copy to John Major, who wrote back saying he hoped to avoid the "snakes" in the game.

Girl talk

ON THE eve of the first anniversary of François Mitterrand's death, a new biography suggests that he was true to himself to the last. The journalist Jean-Marc Benamou was present at Mitterrand's last supper with family and friends on New Year's Eve 1995, eight days before the President died. Was the great man concerned about European Union or unemployment in France? Not quite. His conversation, Benamou reports, turned largely on Julia Roberts and a dinner he had once had with her.

"That was a big ambition," Mitterrand said. "And by the way, those legs in *Pretty Woman*; they were certainly her legs, weren't they?"

King fung

A MONSTER truffle was sacrificed at a special New Year's Eve dinner in Hong Kong for 120 gourmets. The 20oz Italian fungus was bought for HK\$40,000 (about £3,000) by a local hotel, outbidding chefs in Milan, New York, Paris and Tokyo. "It is wonderful to find this. It is like a dinosaur egg from *Jurassic Park*," said Mario Carameila, chef at the Grand Stanford Harbour View Hotel. "Santa Claus brought me this truffle because I have been a good chef."

● Paul McCartney is not the only rock legend to receive high honour. The craggy-faced rock-star Johnny Halliday, who has been booming out songs for more than three decades, has been nominated for France's highest civilian award: the Legion d'Honneur.

Old King Soul

THE HORDES of wailing teenagers may have deserted him but for the American actor David Soul,



David Soul: mellowed

blond half of television's original cop duo *Starsky and Hutch*, the show must go on. These days, fraying slightly at the edges, a mellowed Hutch piles the London party circuit, where he often gives impromptu piano performances of hits such as *Don't Give Up On Us* and *Silver Lady*. Now 53, Soul is taking to the road again to promote his next album, due out in February. Twenty years on, his fans may wave pension books instead of cigarette lighters, but Soul is philosophical about his waning celebrity. "Celebrity is like ice cream," he says. "It melts."

P-H-S



A SHOT AT PEACE

Hebron has become a metaphor for Arab-Israeli confrontation

For a dreadful instant in Hebron yesterday Noam Friedman, the off-duty Israeli conscript who emptied the magazine of his machinegun into the crowded marketplace, stood as symbol for all the tensions and hatreds that form the backdrop to the protracted negotiation of Israel's promised withdrawal from most of this West Bank city. The ensuing panic was not confined to Friedman's Palestinian targets, but to the Jewish enclave in the city's heart, which has been recently targeted by petrol-bombers, was to open fire in the mistaken belief that this was a Palestinian attack.

This could all too easily have escalated into a repeat of September's dreadful gun battles in Jerusalem. The speed with which calm was restored, thanks to improved co-operation between the Israeli military and the Palestinian police, is encouraging proof that both sides have learnt from that disaster — and that the lesson has been absorbed not only by those charged with keeping order, but by their political masters.

Just as Yasser Arafat was quick to telephone Binayamin Netanyahu early last month, to condemn the murder of a woman and her son at the Beit El settlement, so Mr Netanyahu immediately contacted Mr Arafat, and followed through by sternly and publicly insisting that no act of violence would stand in the way of a Hebron deal. Better still, Mr Netanyahu — who for months has appeared to be in no hurry to agree fresh terms for a redeployment that he used bitterly to oppose — is now insisting that delay can only "provoke and create conditions" for this sort of atrocity.

Friedman's attempt to abort the Hebron deal by violence may thus have the opposite effect, spurring the two sides to a final negotiating effort. But it is a reminder to Mr

Netanyahu of the forces he has to control within his own broad governing coalition. Last week, a group of radical rabbis called on Israeli soldiers to disobey orders to withdraw from Hebron. One of these, Rabbi Eliezer Waldmann, runs a religious school for youths serving in the army.

To a deeply religious young conscript such as Friedman, their words may have inspired his crime; inflammatory edicts issued under the cover of religion should be as offensive to a law-abiding country as the bombs of Palestinian terrorists. Friedman has been denounced even by the militant Jewish Council of Settlements, which opposes further withdrawals from the biblical lands of ancient Israel; but his act is an outgrowth of their uniting of religious Judaism with territorial irredentism. Mr Netanyahu won a democratic mandate last May to place greater stress on Israel's security as he proceeds to implement the Oslo peace process. He was not elected to put it permanently on ice; yet he will make little headway without confronting both the extreme religious right and those in Likud who adhere to the party's long-held doctrine that the primordial biblical lands cannot and must not be traded for peace.

This he seems increasingly to recognise, as he prepares to outflank opposition within his Cabinet to the Hebron redeployment by direct resort to the Knesset. Mr Arafat would be unwise to complicate his course by insisting on written guarantees and timetables for the next step, Israeli troop withdrawals from villages and rural areas of the West Bank. An American note spelling out the obligations of both sides should suffice. Mr Netanyahu would prefer to move directly to "final stage" talks; that deserves serious Palestinian consideration. With extremists on both sides so ready to sabotage each small step, it may well be wiser to proceed on all fronts at the same time.

TRUMAN AND MARSHALL

Fifty years ago: Americans chose global leadership. What now?

A set of dramatic decisions taken in 1947 confirmed the onset of the Cold War. With them came the transformation of the United States into an internationalist superpower. Two men in particular offered the leadership necessary to mobilise a great nation. On March 12, 1947, President Truman stood before a Republican-led Congress and appealed for military aid for Greece and Turkey. He went beyond that request to argue: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

Two months earlier, Truman had bravely appointed General George C. Marshall, a man whose popularity and prestige far outranked his own, as Secretary of State. On June 5, 1947, Marshall used a Commencement Address at Harvard University to outline a "European Recovery Programme". This unprecedented plan for generous economic assistance would save a continent and bear Marshall's name. The intellectual reasoning behind Washington's new strategy was contained in a justly celebrated anonymous article in the journal *Foreign Affairs* that same year. It came from the pen of George Kennan, a senior State Department official. Totalitarianism could, he argued, be checked and then defeated by "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment". The institutional consequences were recognised in the creation by the US Congress of the Department of Defence, the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. With the birth of Nato two years later, all the essential elements that would guide the democracies through the Cold War had been put in place. The wisdom shown in 1947 was

rewarded, four decades later, by the collapse of the Soviet empire.

Compared with the boldness shown in 1947, the response of Western nations to the end of the Cold War has been puny. That has been particularly true of the Clinton Administration, whose sole institutional innovation — the National Economic Council — exists to use international relations for short-term economic and trade advantage. Nato, meanwhile, is blundering towards a hasty and ill-conceived expansion.

George Bush perceived the need for a New World Order after the Gulf War but never quite managed to explain exactly what this ought to be or to entail. Uncertainty has deepened since he left the White House. For Bill Clinton and most Democrats, foreign policy now represents a vast employment promotion exercise. The inconsistencies in Bob Dole's approach to external questions in the last presidential campaign reflected a wider, and disturbing, breakdown of consensus in Republican ranks. This would matter less if others, notably in Europe, were capable of extending their horizons to meet the new challenges. In reality, the grand language of federalism and integration masks an introspection, bordering on insularity, and a frequent preference for protectionism.

Fifty years ago there was an obvious threat that permitted Truman and Marshall to reconstruct American foreign policy. But there was also the political will to ignore the electorally expedient. Circumstances may be different today; but the need for intelligent, principled American leadership is no less pressing. If Mr Clinton wishes to give proof of that in his second term, a rethink of Nato's expansion would his best starting point.

BROUGHT TO BOOK

Computers can never replace the pleasure of the printed page

"A good book is the best of friends, the same today and for ever." How often has this 19th-century commonplace been inscribed over public libraries or written on the flyleaves of presentation volumes. And how gleefully have futurologists pronounced it dead, swept away by the forward march of the computer and the replacement of books by CD-Rom. Martin Tupper, who coined the phrase, has the last laugh, however: a survey by the Policy Studies Institute shows that people are buying more books, and that the fashion for transferring the written word on to plastic disks has had little impact on the market for old-fashioned printed books.

Almost half those asked said they were currently reading a book for pleasure, a proportion barely changed in the last six years. People spent more time reading than they did indulging in the two other British obsessions, gardening and DIY. Some 30 per cent of those surveyed had bought 16 or more books in the past year, compared to 28 per cent in 1989. And although almost a third of British households now own a computer, only a fraction have the multi-media capacity to run CD-Roms. Of those that did, most used it for work and half for playing games; a quarter used CD-Roms for reference and very few for general reading. The reason should be obvious to all those who have touted computer literacy as the road to the future. They have only to reflect

on Tolstoy's opinion that "of all the needs a book has the chief need is that it be readable" to realise that he was speaking not only figuratively. If a book cannot be stuffed in a pocket or left beside a bed, it can hardly claim to be readable, however limpid its prose. You cannot scroll through a Ruth Rendell on a warm beach if sand in the works leaves you forever in suspense. Nor can you bury your head in a computerised Rousseau on the Underground without being terminated by a crowd piling on at Holborn.

Multi-media advocates argue that computers will become cheaper, pocket-sized like the paperbacks they will replace, and voice-activated so that a lazy reader can simply order them to turn the page. Barbara Cartland CD-Roms can be drawn by telephone from a computer library and printed out, page by page or chapter by chapter according to your appetite for handsome dukes and swooning heroines.

A good book, however, is a form of art, in which typography, illustrations and marked endpapers combine to produce a work that is as aesthetically pleasing as its contents are nourishing. No jazzy illustration pasted on the plastic CD-Rom cover can be as beautiful. Nor can spluttering at a screen ever have the same cathartic effect as scrawling "preposterous" in the margins of an offending paperback.

Curbing directors' right to silence

From Mr A. S. Minns

Sir, Mr Piers Ashworth, QC, in what strikes me as an attack on the right of us all to remain silent when accused (letter, December 27), believes that those who trade with the benefit of limited liability should be stripped of the common-law privilege against self-incrimination. He argues that because a company is an "artificial body" created by statute a director should not expect the same human rights as everyone else.

May I remind Mr Ashworth that the principal fiduciary duties on a director to behave with probity are imposed by the common law. Since directors face the obligations, it is not illogical that they should also receive the protection of the common law.

Mr Ashworth exempts from his would-be Orwellian regime those business people who risk all their assets — as "most professionals are (rightly) compelled to do". However, professionals (including those in his own profession) take out insurance cover for such risks and thereby keep their personal assets protected.

Those who are frightened that their insurance cover will not suffice commonly put their personal assets into family trusts or transfer them to their spouses. In the case of the international accountancy firms, they may try to transfer their businesses to offshore limited liability partnerships.

Requiring people to talk in police cells has a wholly unedifying track record where it has been practised. The UK consistently loses human rights cases before the European courts. It will be a tragedy if the protection of our basic human rights is abandoned by our judiciary and senior lawyers and has to be left to Europe to enforce.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,
ANTHONY MINNS (Chairman),
MM & K Limited (financial advisors),
1 Bengal Court, Birch Lane, EC2,
December 30.

Academy cash crisis

From Mr Nicholas A. H. Stacey

Sir, Companies have for long been exhorted to elect non-executive directors to their boards. The proved advantage of such "outsiders" is their independence and wealth of experience gathered elsewhere.

The symbiosis of these two qualities gives non-executives a wide perspective; their effectiveness, if well chosen, can be seminal. One may ask why such a good example of the corporate world in mingling insiders with outsiders in the boardroom has not been followed more closely by professional associations.

The recently surfaced sad confusion about money at the Royal Academy of Arts — running into deficit and failing to publish annual accounts for over a decade (letters, December 13, 23) — could have been avoided had the Academicians recruited among their members two or three colleagues with commercial experience.

Some professional bodies, such as accountants and lawyers, have members with considerable business experience on their governing bodies; but, I guess, numerous professional societies, associations and institutions in the arts and sciences are devoid of what many now consider as necessary commercial nous for running an organisation. The remedy is at hand.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS A. H. STACEY,
Reform Club, Pall Mall, SW1.

Millennium challenge

From Mr and Mrs Ian Hall

Sir, We are struck by the contrast between the Tokyo International Forum (Arts, December 30) and the feeble attempts to produce a building in the UK to mark the millennium. Why does the Millennium Commission persist with the polluted site near London, the preparation costs of which must equal those of the buildings themselves. Who can blame the private sector for its reluctance to back such a project?

Plenty of sites exist north of Watford for a design to challenge that of Tokyo, and plenty of entrepreneurs to fund it. The UK has some of the best architects and engineers in the world. They would welcome the challenge.

May we propose a new year's resolution for the commission? To grasp the nettle and start again.

Yours faithfully,
LOIS HALL,
IAN HALL,
(Architects (retired)),
The Cottage, Lower Snowden,
Burnhill Green, South Staffordshire.

The Times and Iran

From Mr Mohammad Safaei

Sir, Reading your report and leading article (December 16) on US preparations for military strikes against Iran, I cannot help feeling that *The Times* is intent on creating tension in the Persian Gulf region.

May I reiterate what has been declared on numerous occasions, that Iran condemns all terrorist actions, regardless of the motive, time, place and the victims involved.

During the last year, *The Times* has reported a number of accusations against Iran — for instance on the explosion in Jeddah and the crash of a

Moral excellence in Catholic schools

From the Reverend
Leo Chamberlain, OSB,
Headmaster of Ampleforth College

Sir, William Rees Mogg's friendly article of December 23, "Religious schools against the world" (letters, December 30), pursues important questions. But the dividing line between Ampleforth, as a Catholic school, and others is not, as he suggests, simply over the teaching of morality based on religion as against a moral relativism, important though that is.

An education in faith and virtue is about the whole of life and death. Catholic schools attempt this vision for all, not just as an option for a few. Ampleforth College, where the monastic community and the lay teaching staff co-operate at every level, is the work of Ampleforth Abbey, a living community of faith. This cannot be compared with the provision of a chaplain, or with arrangements to take children out to Mass, as refugees from their secular environment.

There is a unity of aim and loyalty among our parents which surprises those who meet it for the first time. Our pupils come from all over the country and from abroad. More than 75 per cent of them are in the category known dismissively today as "distant boarders". Their parents sacrifice a great deal; they understand that religious faith today must, in an adult, be a free and personal decision. But they understand, too, that such decisions do not come out of thin air.

All believers, including our young, need the support of communities of faith. This is ever more so today: social attitudes towards religious faith are very different from forty years ago. This gives a particular point both to ecumenical endeavour, to which we

are committed, and to our educational effort.

There is no contradiction between religion and academic excellence. Theology should be taught to the same intellectual level as other subjects, and with a priority in the timetable. At the over-crowded GCSE years, it is abandoned.

Catholic schools must look to the highest academic standards: students need the best examination results they can get. In Catholic schools with a wide range of ability, the ablest do brilliantly and others frequently do better than they ever imagined possible.

Yours etc,
LEO CHAMBERLAIN,
Headmaster,
Ampleforth College, York,
December 30.

From Mr R. H. A. Brodhurst

Sir, I had the considerable privilege of teaching at Ampleforth from 1985 to 1990. As an Anglican my initial preconceptions and doubts were swept aside by the faith of the whole community, both Abbey and school. Their holistic approach is surely at the heart of all the best schools, both maintained and independent. Catholic and Anglican.

Education which concentrates on exam-passing is no education. All schools should prepare their pupils for life by giving them a firm foundation based on religious morality. To fail to do so is to fail to educate our charges.

Yours sincerely,
R. H. A. BRODHURST,
The Mill, Stanford Dingley,
Reading, Berkshire,
December 30.

The Prince's trusts

From Lord Mason of Barnsley

Sir, There is no doubt that the Prince of Wales does not get the recognition he deserves for the outstanding work of his trusts ("With a little help from His Royal Highness", December 27).

One of these, the Prince's Youth Business Trust (PYBT), takes young persons off the dole and launches them in their own businesses, helping them to fulfil their ambitions and support the local economy.

As chairman of the PYBT in South Yorkshire for the last ten years, I am fully aware of its value. This area has been ravaged by the closures of steel plants and pits, and there are many unemployed with bright business ideas who need help.

My board of volunteers, meeting in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, launches about 14 new entrepreneurs from the dole queues each month, about 150 each year. After

they have taken a business training course and prepared a business plan the board then considers financing their enterprise. Over the last ten years in South Yorkshire we have reduced the unemployment figures by about 1,200, as well as pumping over £2 million into the area.

We are just one example among 37 regions, all based on a vast volunteer army of board members and business advisors, one to every business we launch. Her Majesty's Government and the banks give some financial assistance, but most of the money which keeps the PYBT in being is again raised by volunteers.

I doubt if HRH ever realised at the inception of this scheme that after ten years over 6,000 men and women would be engaged in this marvellous enterprise of national endeavour to help our disadvantaged young people.

Yours sincerely,
MASON OF BARNSLEY,
House of Lords.

Scots identity

From Mr Ian Mitchell

Sir, Your readers south of the Watford Gap may feel you neglected one aspect of the "important truth about the stateless nation" in your leading article of December 27, "Scots who have": namely the anti-English manner in which Scots are perceived to be "expressing their identity with new confidence".

There are many of us living north of the Border who, disillusioned by the boorish behaviour regularly displayed by all sides at Westminster, view the fact that the establishment of yet another such circus in Edinburgh would be an undesirable extravagance.

We are, nevertheless, driven to more determined expression of our identity by a tendency that manifests itself widely in the south of England, and frequently in your own pages: the use of the terms "England" or "English" when what is meant is "Britain" and "British".

I was born in south-west Scotland of parents whose origins lie in Aberdeenshire and Slys, and first set foot on English soil at the age of 16 to visit to the Festival of Britain.

I am content to be British, but simply cannot be English. In my experience, this is a concept easily grasped by anyone I meet on the Continent, but beyond the understanding of many English people.

A little less ignorance and arrogance in the deep South would take the edge off what is seen as aggression in the North. Provincialism is still provincialism, even when it originates in and around the capital city.

Yours faithfully,
IAN MITCHELL,
76 South Mains Road,
Milingwaie, Glasgow,
December 31.

Talking proper

From Mrs Helen Evans

Sir, It was interesting to read ("It's good to talk — properly", Business, December 30) that BT, in a new initiative with MCI of America called "TalkWorks", is to spend tens of millions of pounds to tackle the alleged inability of British people to hold proper conversations.

May I suggest that if this initiative is to have any effect, it will need to be spearheaded by someone who can talk properly — grammatically speaking — himself or herself. Bring in a television newsreader and engage a professor of English language as series adviser. And forget Bob Hoskins, the cockney actor who used to feature in the BT advertisements.

Let's hope that Mr John Turner of TalkWorks was misquoted when he said: "By encouraging communication we will grow the telecommunications market". If not, perhaps TalkWorks should replace him with a person who recognises that we grow roses but increase markets.

Yours faithfully,
HELEN EVANS,
Burton Mill Lodge,
Burton Mill, Petworth, West Sussex.

Deja vu

From Mr Eric Smith

Sir, In his essay today on predictable journalism, Matthew Parris prudently forbore to mention his inevitable articles describing — and, of course, paying for — his annual holiday.

Yours sincerely,
ERIC SMITH,
20 Sunningdale Road,
Saltash, Cornwall,
December 30.

What is more, your Magazine [June 22; see also Mr Safaei's letter, Magazine, June 29] printed an interview with the leader of this group, which has opened offices in various European cities to raise funds to finance its terrorist activities, in and outside Iran.

Yours faithfully,
MOHAMMAD SAFAEI
(Deputy Head of Mission),
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
16 Prince's Gate, SW7,
December 16.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Slang as origin of the gift of tongues

From Mr Peter Stockill

Sir, Jesse Jackson does a disservice to African Americans by condemning black American English or Ebonics (report, December 24). African Americans have their own musical culture, from blues to rap. Now they can be seen as having their own language. They have enriched music and now they are enriching language.

Language is central to a people's notion of self-worth. The vociferous campaigning by members of the Welsh Language Society is an indication of how language is perceived as a stepping-stone to nationhood.

Why shouldn't African American slang be seen as an incipient new language? Perhaps "slanguage" is a necessary precursor to a new language, just as Afrikaans originated as an informal version of Dutch. Pidgin English and Creole are valid languages in their own right, giving racial groups a sense of dignity.

English is a hybrid language, drawing upon the cultures of people who have come to these islands. American English has been enriched by Spanish-speaking and Irish people, among many others. People from Africa settled in America, albeit unwillingly, long before the waves of 19th-century European immigration.

Yours sincerely,
PETER STOCKILL,
to Brunner House,
Langridge Crescent,
Berwick Hills, Middlesbrough,
December 27.

Britain's diverse faiths

From Mr Anil Savjani

Sir, Mr Karim Chowdhury (letter, December 30) on the one hand suggests that tolerance means "respecting the rights of others to practise their ways" and on the other hand congratulates the outrageous behaviour of a teacher who reduced children performing in a school carol concert to tears.

What enrages me is the insistence of some Muslims to be "obstinate" in pursuing practices which are offensive to the majority of people in countries where they are in a minority. Where they are in a majority, in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the appalling intolerance and persecution of non-Muslim minorities by the State does not prompt criticism or invite pleas for respecting the rights of others from the likes of Mr Chowdhury.

Contrast this to the tolerance shown by Hindus, both here and in India — a country which has bent over backwards and even modified its constitution to accommodate the special religious and legal requirements of the Muslim tradition.

Yours etc,
ANIL SAVJANI,
38 Morley Crescent West,
Stannmore, Middlesex,
December 30.

From Mr R. K. Holland

Sir, Mr Chowdhury is to be congratulated on his proud, understated comments on "contamination" and "practices of falsehood and lies" in defence of his faith.

He has surely shown himself to be a true believer and can be seen to be upholding Islam's modern image in its regard for other faiths and the world in general. God Bless Us, Every One!

Yours sincerely,
R. K. HOLLAND,
17 Hobart Road,
Dewsbury, West Yorkshire,
December 30.

Yesterday's men

From Mr Robert Ellerby

Sir, Your leader Yesterday, "A hard day's knight", credited Nowhere Man and Tomorrow Never Knows to Sir Paul McCartney. Both songs came from the pen of John Lennon, as *Even Your Mother Should Know*.

All My Loving,
ROBERT ELLERBY,
27 Manor Road,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire,
January 1.

Mayan prediction

From Dr Georges Ware

Sir, My wife has just telephoned me to say that the world is to end on December 23 in the year 2012.

"How do you know?" I asked. "Hath God spoken?" "Not necessarily," she replied, "but it's in *The Times* today".

Yours faithfully,
GEORGES WARE,
85 Cranbrook Road, Redland, Bristol,
December 23.

Fully furnished

From Mr J. M. C. Clark-Maxwell

Sir, Let us hope that Mr Eveleigh's confusion about mensa (letter, January 1) is not widespread. How many old maids may have been disappointed merely because, when asked to conjugate, they declined?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CLARK-MAXWELL,
The Mead House, Church Road,
Swallowfield, Berkshire,
January 1.

OBITUARIES

GENERAL SIR IAN RICHES

General Sir Ian Riches, KCB, DSO, Commandant General Royal Marines, 1959-62, died on December 23 aged 88. He was born on September 27, 1908.

Ian Riches was awarded his DSO for his contribution to attacks against the left flank of Marshal Kesselring's defences south of the Po Valley during the final phase of the Second World War in Italy.

In the winter of 1944-45 Riches's formation, 43 Commando, Royal Marines, had just come from harassing the 30,000 men of the German XXI Mountain Corps among the freezing highlands of Yugoslavia. When a British presence ceased to be welcome to Tito's Communist partisans, 43 Commando was ejected and subsequently redeployed to the wet and bleak marshes around Lake Comacchio near the Italian coast just north of Ravenna. With other commando units, Riches and his men fought a bitter and difficult battle throughout April 2 and 3, 1945, with little natural cover to help their advances across minefields towards well-prepared German positions.

In this action, for his desperate courage in single-handedly storming German machine-gun positions, the Royal Marines' tenth Victoria Cross was posthumously awarded to Colonel Thomas Hunter of 43 Commando, the only Marine VC of the Second World War. The objective of drawing German reserves away from a thrust elsewhere was achieved.

Ian Henry Riches was commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1927. After training, he joined the battleship *Queen Elizabeth*, flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, where smart guards of honour and crisp ceremonial characterised the daily routine.

In 1935, having specialised in signals, he was signals officer of the mobile naval base deployed to Alexandria during the Abyssinian crisis. At this time he also qualified



as an interpreter in French and Spanish.

By the outbreak of the war, Riches had been promoted to captain and had been selected for the junior war staff course at Camberley staff college.

On completion, he was appointed brigade major of the newly formed 101 Royal Marines Brigade which in September 1940 was involved in the abortive attempt to gain a West African foothold for de Gaulle at Dakar.

Having graduated from the senior staff course at Camberley, Riches served from 1942 in a series of

headquarters appointments with the Royal Marine Division and at the Admiralty until late 1944, when he was dispatched to take command of 43 Commando in the Balkans.

After the war he commanded the Signal School and then 42 Commando based at Malta. On April 28, 1948, four hours after the order to move, his Commando was on its way to Haifa in Palestine to assist in the evacuation of troops during the closing stages of the British Mandate.

This was the month of the infamous massacre of Arabs in the village of Dir Yassin.

Terrorism by the Irgun group, including attacks on British troops and police, was now adding to the well-judged political pressure on Britain exercised worldwide but particularly in America - leading to the acceleration of a messy and dangerous withdrawal process.

42 Commando ended up as part of the Middle East strategic reserve in the Canal Zone. After a short spell in Malta, Riches and 42 Commando were sent to Hong Kong in the local defence and internal security role. Relieved in 1950, he was employed in increas-

ingly significant operational and staff posts, including command of 3 Commando Brigade in the Canal Zone and Malta, until promoted major-general in charge of Portsmouth Group Royal Marines in 1957.

In February 1959 he was promoted lieutenant-general and appointed Commandant General Royal Marines. At the Suez invasion of 1956, helicopter-borne assaults over the beach had been used for the first time, and with great success. This operational concept was further developed during Riches's time as Commandant General. The light fleet carriers *Bulwark* and *Albion* were converted and dedicated to the Commando role and much of the argument revolved around how to maintain a Commando's physical fitness and military efficiency when embarked and deployed abroad.

Riches was adamant that there should be provision for permanent shore-based accommodation and training areas and that two Commandos should be available to be rotated through the operational and training cycle. His representations bore fruit when 40 Commando and the Brigade HQ were moved to Singapore to be available to be embarked in whichever aircraft carrier was deployed East of Suez. In July 1961, when Iraq (setting the pattern for the future) made its first move against Kuwait, the threat of aggression saw the *Bulwark* with 42 Commando and 16 Whirlwind helicopters spearheading the British deterrent forces in exactly the manner envisaged by Riches and his staff.

Ian Riches was noted for his probity, generosity and kindness. Appointed KCB in 1960, he was promoted general in 1961 and retired in 1962. In retirement Riches was a regional director of civil defence and representative colonel commandant of the Royal Marines until 1968.

He is survived by his wife Winifred, daughter of Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, and by their two sons.

LORD GREY OF CODNOR

Charles Cornwall-Legh, CBE, 5th Baron Grey of Codnor, died on December 23 aged 93. He was born on February 10, 1903.



THE circumstances attending the arrival seven years ago of Lord Grey of Codnor in the House of Lords must have left even those in the Labour Party who wish to undermine the hereditary element feeling that the half had not been told them. For it was achieved by means that would have to be considered quaint and eccentric even by the occasionally haphazard ways of the Upper House. In 1959 Charles Cornwall-Legh took his place on the red benches as the successor to the 4th Baron, a nephew of one of his ancestors, who had died in 1496, at which time the barony had drifted into abeyance.

Charles Legh Shuldum Cornwall-Legh was the son of Charles Cornwall-Legh, who died in 1924. His father was 6th in descent from the 16th and last Baron of Burford so styled, though he never received a summons to Parliament, the 16th Baron being himself 16th in descent from Richard, King of the Romans, Earl of Cornwall and Provence, and Count of Poitou. His mother was Geraldine Shuldum, the daughter of an Army officer.

In his early days he was educated at King's School, Bruton, and Hertford College, Oxford. He served as a flight lieutenant in the Auxiliary Air Force and the RAF and was a recipient of the Air Efficiency Award. Otherwise he occupied himself with country affairs in Knutsford, Cheshire, where he was a landowner and farmer.

On paper this looked impressive: he was High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1939, and served as a JP from 1938 to 1974. He was a Deputy Lieutenant from 1949, a county councillor, 1949-77. He was chairman of the new Cheshire County Council, 1974-76, and of the Cheshire Police Authority, 1957-74. He was appointed OBE in 1971 and advanced to CBE in 1977.

The reality of the situation was, however, rather different. His home, High Legh Hall, with 100 acres of land, was compulsorily purchased by the Army at the beginning of the war, though by a deft clause he inserted, he was able to repurchase it - at the same price, £20,000 - in 1962. An earnest genealogist, his life-long ambition was to pursue his father's quest to prove his right to the ancient barony of Grey of Codnor. In order to pay the bills of the College of Arms over a number of years, he sold land for housing, and dabbled in a number of businesses with questionable success.

His father made the first claim in 1926, just before new rules were introduced to curb such claims. In future any claimant who was not a child of the last holder of the title had to represent at least one third of the dignity, and the beginning of the abeyance had to date from within 100 years. The Greys of Codnor had been in abeyance since 1496, and Cornwall-Legh's father was one of 12 co-heirs. Nevertheless, in 1928 the barony was declared to be an ancient barony in fee in abeyance, and

Cornwall-Legh one of the co-heirs.

Following his father's death, Charles Cornwall-Legh presented further petitions and undertook the costly genealogical research into the lines of the co-heirs, until he eventually proved his right in 1959.

The Greys were an ancient family, their first proven ancestor being Henry de Grey, seated at the Manor of Throck in 1199. The Greys of Codnor descended from his second son Richard, whose grandson, Henry de Grey of Codnor, was summoned to Parliament in 1299. Six generations later the barony fell into abeyance, and being inherited through the female line, was vested in his three aunts, Elizabeth, Lady Zouche, Eleanor Newport and Lucy Lady Lenham. It was from Lucy (who left two daughters) that the 5th Lord Grey of Codnor descended.

He married in 1930 Dorothy Whitson Scott (who died in 1993) and they had one son, Richard, a county man like his father and a former member of the British ski team, who succeeds to the barony, and two daughters.

JACK PERRY

Jack Perry, pioneer of British-Chinese trade, died on December 12 aged 81. He was born on March 31, 1915.



JACK PERRY belonged to that generation of East End Jews whose entrepreneurial drive has contributed much to Britain's economy. He was born and brought up in the East End of London at a time of struggle and political strife. He was in Cable Street when Oswald Mosley's blackshirts were faced down by the local community, and his politics always reflected the left-wing

influences of his youth.

He was a chronic asthmatic from childhood, and his ill-health denied him both a regular education and war-time service. Like many East Enders, he entered the rag trade, and that would have probably remained his life-time calling but for an interest in East-West trade which led him to attend the Moscow Economic Conference in 1952.

There he established especially good links with the Chinese delegation. For the next 40 years he devoted his life to improving trade and political and cultural links

with China. He helped to found the 48 Group for companies trading with China and he launched his own company, London Export, to promote that same endeavour.

He made more than seventy visits to China and was instrumental in helping the Chinese Government to build new relationships with organisations across Western Europe. When the first trade office of the Chinese authorities opened in Berlin, Perry made weekly visits there to exchange views and report developments to the Chinese commercial staff and to assist their efforts to create links with Western European companies.

In 1954 the conference to end the war in Indo-China and bring peace and independence to a united Vietnam was held in Geneva, to which Premier Chou En-lai led the Chinese delegation. In the conference's early stages, Perry was requested by the Chinese delegation to be present in order to assist in the negotiations then taking place for opening up trade relations between Britain and China.

At the end of the conference, diplomatic relations between Britain and China were resumed. Legations were opened in both capitals and the first Chinese trade mission from the People's Republic arrived in Britain in 1954. Perry was involved in assisting the delegation during its visit.

In 1953 he made a visit to China together with the representatives of 15 companies who together formed an informal British delegation. They signed a trade arrangement worth £30 million, which encouraged other Western delegations to follow suit. It was this visit which led to the formation in 1954 of the 48 Group of British Traders with China. Perry became its vice-chairman.

In 1986 Perry was honoured by the University of International Business and Economics in Peking, becoming a visiting professor there and subsequently spending long periods lecturing Chinese students.

He was also a fine bridge player, frequently playing with the British international Ralph Swimer, with whom he maintained friendly relations through shared tailoring connections from their youth. On a number of occasions he took bridge teams to China for exhibition matches.

Jack Perry was married to Doris Shaer, generally known as Kate, for 46 years. She died in 1985. He is survived by three sons and two daughters.

MURIEL MONKHOUSE

Muriel Monkhouse, OBE, Red Cross worker and ballet lover, died on December 4 aged 86. She was born on February 22, 1910.

IN HER own quiet way, Muriel Monkhouse led a double life in the worlds of ballet and humanitarian service. By day she was an invaluable officer of the British Red Cross Society, the evenings might well find her cooking supper for the likes of Margot Fonteyn or Rudolf Nureyev. She went under two names, too: having her first baptismal name of Leonora, she used only her second one, Muriel, for official purposes, but preferred the nickname Tiny, by which she was always known in the dance world.

Ballet came first into her life. She had neither the physique nor the co-ordination to become a professional dancer, but her love of the art was such that she faithfully took class for many years. Born in Hampstead, she was ten when her father's work as an actuary took the family to Cape Town, and it was in Helen Webb's ballet studio there during the mid-1930s that she met the dancer Maude Lloyd, a South African who had temporarily returned after moving to London and becoming a leading member of Ballet Rambert.

Much of an age and with similar tastes, the two women became friends. On moving back to London, Tiny took class at the Rambert School and with the choreographer Antony Tudor; the latter, a good friend but an exigent taskmaster, trusted her know-

ledge enough to let her stand in occasionally for him as a teacher. When Maude Lloyd married the writer Nijel Gossling, she was a bridesmaid and became godmother to their son Nicholas.

In June 1940, as the German army marched on Paris, Gosling volunteered for work with the new foreign relations department of the Red Cross and St John War Organisation. On his first day he found so many inquiries waiting from refugees separated from their families that he went home at lunchtime and enlisted Muriel Monkhouse's help because she could type and speak French. Thirty thousand inquiries arrived in the first three months alone. Thus began a task that lasted more than five decades.

Throughout the war she worked in the French depart-

ment, later dealing with Hungarian, Yugoslav and Austrian families too. During the Blitz, with no time for her to get home to Hampstead in the evening before the bombing began, the Goslings, living in Kensington, invited her to move in with them, and she remained there ever after, becoming "like family". In 1949 she took over running the Red Cross Trading Department, where her sensitivity, patience and skill in inquiries reunited many thousands of families separated by war.

Besides an immense correspondence, she visited the Red Cross societies in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, France and the Netherlands; later, conflicts and disasters extended her work to Biafra, Pakistan, Cyprus and the Lebanon. When the number of inquiries

began to lessen (there are still 2,000 a year), she started a campaign to find former refugees whose experience had left them too alarmed to seek the help they needed.

Her devotion to her work was recognised in 1977 by her appointment as OBE, characteristically, she insisted on regarding this as a tribute to the department rather than to her personally. However, she could not similarly shrug off two further distinctions. In 1979, when she officially retired (although she continued to work voluntarily for two days a week), she was given the Society's Badge of Honour for Distinguished Service and honorary life membership. Even more notably, in 1984 an annual Muriel Monkhouse Award was instituted, awarded to mark the exceptional personal and professional qualities of a volunteer in the welfare service of any UK Red Cross branch.

In spite of her heavy professional load, Muriel Monkhouse remained intimately involved with ballet and art: attending performances and helping to entertain the guests who visited or stayed at the Goslings' home, where painters, writers, directors, choreographers and dancers from England and abroad were constantly coming and going, and where Rudolf Nureyev had his London quarters in the basement. Her reticent manner would have made her almost unnoticeable had she not spent so much care on ensuring both the comfort and the feeding of all who came.

She did not marry, but she never lacked for a true family life.



The Times Best Sermons of 1996

WHAT is a good sermon? Who are the best preachers? How well do they deliver their sermons? You will find the answers to these questions in *The Times Best Sermons of 1996*, edited and introduced by Ruth Gledhill, *The Times* religious affairs correspondent. You can buy this lively and challenging book for the special price of £7.99, £2.00 less than the normal price. Gledhill visits hundreds of churches of all denominations every year and she is constantly struck by the variety and standard of preaching she encounters. To find examples of good practice she, the College of Preachers and *The Times*, launched the first Preacher of the Year award in 1995 with a prize of £1,000 and a specially commissioned sculpture. Thirty of the best sermons have been chosen from entries to the 1996 competition and published in this book. Some are challenging, others are enlightening or comforting; there are sermons that tackle the great moral dilemmas of the day and sermons which make the heart want to sing. You can also read the text of the first winning sermon delivered by Preacher of the Year, the Rev Barry Overend of Leeds. This is a splendid book to buy for yourself or to give as a gift.



Form for ordering the book, including fields for name, address, and payment details.

TRAPPED AND STARVED

TALE OF RUSSIAN DISASTER

How at least 15,000 Russian troops were trapped near Lake Kianta, held there for 10 days, and then practically annihilated as a fighting force by Finnish forces inferior in number and equipment, is described by a special correspondent of British United Press at Rovaniemi. The terrain near the westernmost of the two northern arms of Lake Kianta forms a natural trap, into which two Russian regiments blundered early in December. In normal weather they might have fought their way free, but the Finns, helped by the intense cold and snow, managed to encircle them and cut off their supplies. Day after day the Finns made no move to do anything but hold them there. Day by day the bitter cold from which there was no shelter and the dwindling food supplies brought the Russians' resistance lower and lower. The cold froze their finger tips until they could scarcely pull a trigger. After 10 days the Finns attacked. For three days the Russians held out, but on the fourth all was over and thousands of Russians lay dead. Of those alive, many were hardly strong enough to stand. According to military reconstructions of the

ON THIS DAY

January 2, 1940

By attacking Finland early in the Second World War the Russians got a great deal more than they bargained for. The war was short-lived but the heroic resistance put up by the Finns revealed serious deficiencies in the Soviet fighting forces. campaign which led up to the disaster, two regiments, with a total of about 8,000 men, reached Lake Kianta. A third regiment which tried to skirt the lake in the south was defeated at Suomussalmi early in December. The fourth regiment was apparently kept in reserve between Lake Kianta and the frontier. These are the troops which, with stragglers who managed to escape from Lake Kianta, were reported yesterday to be retreating towards the border in the vicinity of Juntuntunturi, on the northernmost corner of the lake, pursued by the Finns, who are said to have crossed the border at one point.

A violent attack by the Russian forces in the Taipale sector of the Karelian Isthmus on Sunday was repulsed, after intensive artillery fire, states the Finnish communiqué last night (quoted by British United Press). North of Suomussalmi, where the Russians suffered a heavy defeat two days ago, Finnish troops are still in pursuit. A Russian attack in the direction of Ilomantsi, north of Lake Ladoga, has also been repulsed. The communiqué alleges that the Russian aircraft dropped two bombs on the River Passijoki inside Norwegian territory on Sunday. At least 12 persons are believed to have been killed in air raids in south and central Finland on Sunday and six Russian machines are believed to have been brought down. Turkey (Abol) was bombed yesterday, it is stated, but no details are known. A message from Stavrik on the Norwegian border states that rumours that the port of Petsamo had been recaptured by the Finns are regarded there as in the highest degree improbable. Several Russian tanks and armoured cars arrived at Salmijärvi from the north yesterday and proceeded southwards, in an orderly fashion. The Finnish Legation in London stated yesterday that no confirmation had been received of the recapture of Petsamo.

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THE TIMES

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THURSDAY JANUARY 2 1997

'We were just not up to it,' Lloyd laments after Zimbabwe secure victory in series

One-day shambles shames England

FROM SIMON WILDE IN HARARE

HARARE (England won toss; Zimbabwe beat England by five runs on revised target)

A NEW year, but the same old cock-up. England were on top in this match for seven of its eight hours but, as so often is the case, when the hour that really mattered came around they were found hopelessly wanting. In fact, their performance in the final hour, during which they needed just 74 runs from the last 14 overs, with seven wickets standing, to win this second one-day international was spineless even by comparison with some of their other recent disasters.

What made this capitulation all the more painful was the fact that this was England's chance to show that they are indeed superior to Zimbabwe, over whom they claimed a moral victory in the recent drawn Test series. It was their chance to "murder" them. But there was only one team murdered yesterday, and it was not Zimbabwe but England, and they were done to death by their own hand.

It was embarrassing to watch and is embarrassing to contemplate. Some of the mistakes England made as they pursued a revised target of 185 in 42 overs was so basic that it

John Woodcock 25
Australia humbled 25

beggers belief that these are players who are supposed to know the limited overs game inside out. Their team selection was wrong, their playing mathematics were wrong.

No less hurtful are the facts surrounding the result. It means that England are the first team to lose a limited overs series to Zimbabwe (who are now 2-0 up in the three-match series); that they have lost four times in five one-day matches to the "weakest" Test nation in the world; and that they have lost the last 11 one-day internationals they have played against Test nations away from home.

Needless to say, the late change in fortunes met with the raucous delight of a capacity holiday crowd at the Harare Sports Club who had been subdued for most of the afternoon as first Stewart, with 41 from 37 balls, and then Crawley, with 73 from 109, put England in the driving seat. But the crowd's enthusiasm ensured that Zimbabwe never quite gave up. As David Lloyd, the England coach, conceded: "Their players were committed and up for the game... more up for it than ours. The game was there for the taking but we were just not up to it."

England paid a heavy price for leaving out a sixth bats-

man to accommodate a second all-rounder. As was always going to be the case, this left them with a surplus of bowlers and, as it happened, Gough, who took four for 43, Mulhally and Croft howled well enough that Zimbabwe were dismissed inside their 30 overs for 200, although it could have been a lot less. At one point Zimbabwe were 38 for four, the casualties including Campbell and Houghton.

It was then that Zimbabwe first showed their combative nature. Andy Flower scored 63 from 114 balls and Streak a streaky 43 not out. After that, the England captain, later paid tribute to the resourcefulness of these "bits and pieces cricketers".

If only England had players worthy of being damned with such faint praise. Without Thorpe in the side, Irani came in at No 6 and White at No 7 and at a delicate stage of the game they were unable to work the ball around in the way Thorpe might have done. Now were England helped by the rash approach taken by Knight, who started the innings by trying to hit everything and threw himself off his feet to the ball from Brandes that had him caught in the covers.

Stewart and Crawley batted beautifully, timing the ball well and finding the gaps between Zimbabwe's razor-sharp fielders. This pair put on 66 in ten overs for the second wicket and although Whittall removed Stewart and Hussain, Crawley and Atherton kept the score moving steadily.

Atherton himself identified as one of the turning points of the match his own dismissal, which left England 57 for four and needing 48 runs from the last eight overs. He pulled a ball from Strang, who was in the early stages of an outstanding spell of bowling, to deep mid-on.

It was brave captaincy to bowl a leg spinner at this crucial stage of the game but Strang did not let Campbell down. He proved so hard to get away that when England were looking to score at six runs an over his last three overs cost two, three and four runs respectively. In frustration first Crawley and then Irani were fatally drawn into going down the pitch to him and being stumped.

By the time Irani was out the situation had already become desperate for England. From the last two overs 19 were still needed and White was England's only real hope of getting them, but he was promptly adjudged leg before to Streak, though the ball looked to be going down the leg side. The task of scoring 16 from the last over, from Rennie, proved comfortably beyond Croft and Gough.

England's innings was re-



England's desperation is evident as Irani is stumped. Atherton had earlier been dismayed to be caught on the boundary, the moment which began the slide towards defeat

SCOREBOARD FROM HARARE

England won toss	
ZIMBABWE	
G W Flower b Hussain b Gough	4
(16min, 10 balls, 1 four)	
A C Waller b Mulhally	0
(4min, 5 balls)	
*A D R Campbell c Stewart	14
b Gough	
(37min, 17 balls, 2 fours)	
D L Houghton c Croft b Mulhally	15
(11min, 9 balls, 1 four)	
TA J Stewart c Croft b Mulhally	63
(173min, 114 balls, 4 fours)	
C N Evans bow b Croft	32
(44min, 50 balls, 4 fours)	
G J Whittall not out (Stewart)	14
(31min, 26 balls, 1 six)	
P A Strang c Atherton b Croft	1
(5min, 6 balls)	
H H Streak not out	43
(61min, 53 balls, 4 fours)	
E A Brandes c Atherton b Gough	0
(2min, 2 balls)	
J A Rennie b Gough	0
(2min, 3 balls)	
Extras (no 11, no 10, no 3)	24
Total (48.5 overs, 200min)	200
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-2 (G W Flower 0, 2-14 (Campbell 7), 3-26 (Campbell 8), 4-38 (A Flower 14), 5-57 (A Flower 20), 6-125 (A Flower 34), 7-126 (A Flower 34), 8-200 (Streak 43), 9-200 (Streak 43).	
ENGLAND	
N V Knight c Houghton b Brandes	0
(10min, 10 balls)	
TA J Stewart c A Flower b Whittall	41
(140min, 109 balls, 1 six, 4 fours)	
N Hussain bow b Whittall	7
(44min, 18 balls)	
*M A Atherton c Whittall b Strang	25
(38min, 38 balls, 1 four)	
R C Irani c A Flower b Strang	5
(17min, 6 balls)	
C White bow b Streak	10
(17min, 12 balls, 1 four)	
D Gough not out	2
(6min, 2 balls)	
Extras (b 2, lb 5, w 5)	12
Total (7 wickets, 42 overs, 175min)	179

BOWLING: Mulhally 9-1-29-3 (w 2, 3 runs, 5-0-15-2, 2-1-6-0, 2-0-0-11); Gough 8.5-1-43-4 (w 4, 5 runs, 5-1-21-2, 3-0-22-0, 0-5-0-3); Silverwood 6-0-30-0 (lb 2, 4, 4, 3 runs, one spell, White 10-1-38-0 (3 runs, 7-1-22-0, 3-0-17-0); Croft 10-0-33-2 (2 runs, one spell, Irani 5-0-15-0 (1 six, one spell)).
Score after 15 overs: 66-4

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1 (Stewart 0), 2-47 (Crawley 20), 3-95 (Crawley 42), 4-157 (Crawley 58), 5-187 (Irani 4), 6-165 (White 4), 7-165 (Gough 4).
BOWLING: Brandes 5-0-25-1 (1 six, 2 runs, one spell), Rennie 5-0-28-0 (w 1, 4 runs, 4-0-18-0, 1-0-0-0), Streak 9-0-41-1 (w 2, 3 runs, 5-0-25-0, 3-0-16-1), Whittall 6-0-30-2 (w 1, 2 runs, one spell), Evans 2-0-6-0 (w 1 one spell), Strang 9-0-24-3 (one spell), G W Flower 4-0-30-0 (2 runs, one spell).
Score after 15 overs: 71-2
Zimbabwe won on a scoring rate (England set 185 runs off 42 overs after 45 minutes were lost to rain).
Match awards: P A Strang and J P Croft, both selected for A A Gapes.
Umpires: G Evans and I D Robinson.
Reserve umpire: R E Tiffin.
Referee: Harman Singh (India).
One-day series details: First international: Zimbabwe won by two wickets, December 15, Bulawayo. Third international: inconclusive, Harare.

Latest debacle strengthens reformers' hand

Four years ago, in the Australian country town of Albury, I saw England, as favourites for the World Cup, unthinkably beaten by Zimbabwe. There were about 5,000 in attendance for this initial international between the countries and it was one of those sporting occasions that provoke a proprietorial "I was there" reaction from everyone present, all of whom are perfectly certain that its like will not be seen again.

We all know better now and the commemorative scorecard has lost its novelty value. Zimbabwe may still have trouble winning against any of cricket's other leading players, but it appears that they can beat England for a pastime. Their victory yesterday was their fourth in five one-day games and, of the many emotions that the result

produced around British fire-sides, shock will surely have rated pretty low.

There will have been plenty of anger, impatience and exasperation, the feelings that followers of England on tour have come to know too well as one disillusionment has followed another - but nobody can seriously be shocked.

The time for shock would be when, or probably if, England performed overseas with the consistently high quality of which they, and their long-suffering supporters, still believe themselves capable.

The sad truth is that England travel no better than those notorious home-birds, India. Take them away from their own territory and they are a poor side, especially in limited-overs cricket. Perhaps it might now be caustic if one or two of those

Alan Lee, watching from afar, identifies frailties in temperament and technique contributing to growing litany of failure

most closely involved admitted as much and began to address the business of rectifying the matter without the additional handicap of a public believing them either blind or complacent. For the best thing that can be said about this latest tour is that it still has two months to run in search of an improvement. Best to own up to the fact that, thus far, it has been an undignified dismay to us all. It can be misguided and gratuitously offensive to criticise a touring team from a far-off armchair, for even the foreshortening virtues of the television cameras cannot close the distance in miles and, consequently, understanding of conditions. Many is the time that I have been

overcast as England struggled against unkind adversity and sympathised with the players' resentment of the uninformed outrage from home, the ludicrous cries of "drop the lot of them".

Yesterday, though, it was not essential to be in Harare to recognise why England lost. Their eleven successive overseas one-day defeat, against Test nations, was a familiar tale. There was sloppiness, articulated by the unacceptable number of wides and no-balls, a frailty of temperament, technique and intelligence in a run-chase that these players would regard as undemanding on a Sunday afternoon; and a tactical approach that lacked clarity and assertiveness.

It was like watching a ghouliah re-run of one of England's defeats in the last World Cup, nine months ago. The players have changed since then, probably too much, and there is a new man installed as coach, but nothing has been learnt, no discernible advances made.

There is a common fallacy expressed about England and one-day cricket. The suggestion is that it ought to be strong in this country because so much of it is played. Quite the opposite is true and Sir Ian MacLaurin, the watching chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), should need no further reinforcement of his views that the county game needs an urgent revamp.

England's cricketers battled through about 25 limited-overs games a summer for

their counties and learn precious little from them. Their sheer volume and monotony breed an air of going through the motions and discourage anything dynamic or inventive. Hence, when it comes to the more pressurised one-day international, it is approached more with a sense of duty than a sense of occasion.

Tim Lamb, the ECB chief executive accompanying his chairman in Harare, knows that reform is essential, but, depressingly, says that nothing is likely before 2000. Something must be done sooner, however, for if the present trends continue, England are in danger of utter humiliation. Only Zimbabwe were below them in the one-day international table of 1996: England can be consoled only that the match yesterday did not count in that.

'Nobody can be shocked'

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SQUASH

Wheat's damaged heart beats at compelling tempo

Andrew Longmore meets a young player for whom ill health served as inspiration

WHEN the consultant told Chris Wheat that he should play what sport he could manage, it is probable that snooker or a gentle game of cricket were considered suitable sports for a boy with two holes in his heart and a medical record as long as the New Year's Honours List. Wheat, though, had other ideas, and a measure of his own relentless determination to pursue them can be found on the main draw for the British junior open squash championships, which begin today in Sheffield.

Wheat has been drawn to meet Morten Sorensen, of Denmark, in the first round and, realistically, his chances of becoming champion this year are slender. Most medical opinion would suggest that, by rising through the ranks to become one of the most promising juniors in the country, the miracle has already been worked.

For most of the first five years of his life, survival was about the limit of the Wheat family's ambitions for their only son after a large hole in the ventricle had been diagnosed at the age of three months. That meant that the oxygenated blood was being mixed with the deoxygenated blood, weakening the frail body to such an extent that the doctors did not consider an operation practical in those early years.

Soon after, a second hole was discovered in the same section of the heart. An operation scheduled at the age of

two was postponed and again two years later when one of the two holes had closed. To complicate matters further, Wheat began to suffer from epilepsy. For his parents, life was one long return ticket to the Brompton Hospital and days inside doctors' surgeries. "I could hear the 'shoosh, shoosh' of the blood going through the hole when he was lying in our bed," Brenda, his mother, recalled. "We just seemed to go from one thing to another, from bad to worse. We were on the edge all the time. Looking back, I wonder how we got through."

Courage is clearly hereditary in the Wheat family and more than once the doctors must have looked at the pale



Wheat: medical miracle

little boy before them and marvelled at his ability to fight. "The consultant said he just had something in him which told him to hang on and that has carried through into his squash," Brenda said.

Even at the age of nearly 18, there is not a lot of him, but most of Wheat's opponents will tell you that, what he lacks in power, he makes up for in mental strength and stamina. As the doctors found out, he is hard to beat. He is studying for his A levels at Colchester Sixth Form College, wants to become a physio and cannot quite work out what all the fuss is about. The doctors still hope that the hole will close in time. Otherwise, the only legacy of his early illness are the biannual visits to the Brompton Hospital and the awed curiosity of outsiders.

"I feel just as fit as everyone else," he said. "I'm actually known for being very fit. I'm one of those boring players who knocks the ball up and down the wall for hours and waits for the other chap to miss. What's happened to me never really comes into it."

His mother does not forget so easily. "The first time I realised he was playing seriously — I hadn't watched him for a while — I got quite frightened at the pace he was playing," she said. "I didn't realise how good he was getting, but we've never tried to stop him playing."

The only rule of the household is that, if Chris should feel unwell on court, he should shake hands and retire. The bond has been broken once, during the final of a tournament in Norfolk.

"He didn't go for a shot and I thought 'there's something wrong here,'" Derek, his father, said, "but he carried on and actually won that game, though he lost in the end."

It turned out that Chris had suffered a quickening of the heartbeat. "I think I had too much caffeine in my blood," he said, a disingenuous excuse which did not soothe his mother's fears. She, though, is the odd one out. The non-squash player in the family that can also boast daughter Laura, who played for Essex at under-19 level.

Barely a mile from the Wheat's home is the Lendon Squash Club, where Chris trains and plays. Del Harris, Martine Le Moignan and Chris Walker have all graduated to the top rank from the thriving little club behind the school and, if triumph over adversity is the criterion for future success, Wheat will soon join that distinguished list of champions. Sorensen will doubtless find out today that, whatever the doctors might say, there is very little wrong with Wheat's heart.

Order of the Jug the ultimate handle



Forget the knighthoods and the other honours. They are all very well for the Damon Hills and Steven Redgraves, and the dubbing of Sir Alec Belder is a fine way to demonstrate that bowlers, as well as batsmen, can win the top honours in cricket. However, if you want to note the achievements of a sporting legend with something that is really unusual, how about a "commemorative character jug"?

My eye was caught this week by a newspaper advertisement for a strictly limited edition of "The Dickie Bird Character Jug", an eye-catching, some might say alarming, piece of pottery, designed to commemorate the retirement of the world's best-loved umpire.

It is certainly an extraordinary memento. Hand-crafted and painted in traditional Royal Doulton style, the jug, so the accompanying description explained, "captures perfectly the warmth and individuality of Dickie's character. With a delightful cricket bat handle bearing the Test and County Cricket Board initials". It sounds irresistible at £49.95.

Finding a suitable way to honour sporting heroes is seldom easy. Statues, gates, plaques, busts — all have been commissioned to provide a touch of immortality to the greats of the games field. At Liverpool they marked the contribution of Bill Shankly, the football manager, with the Shankly Gates, erected in 1984 and bearing the message "You'll Never Walk Alone".

Such gates at football and cricket grounds are popular — W. G. Grace is honoured in this way at Lord's — and last summer, when they built the new Queen's Stand at Epsom, a permanent reminder of Lester Piggott, the greatest Derby jockey of them all, was added in the form of a paddockside iron gateway, decorated with reminders of his winners, through which every Derby runner will pass.

At Highbury, the bust of Herbert Chapman, the manager of Arsenal from 1925 to 1934, gazes enigmatically across a marble hall. At the Ilford Road stadium, in Oxford, a simple plaque marks the running of the first sub-four-minute mile, by Roger Bannister in 1954. In Clapham, you can wander through Tessa Sanderson Place and Daley Thompson Way.

There are many ways to remember a champion and the indestructible memento of fleeting sporting glory has a long history. The Ancient Greeks, who kept their Olympic Games going for more than a thousand years, used to encourage their victors to erect bronze statues of themselves.

It was an example followed by the Romans, and the Emperor Nero proudly placed an effigy of himself as a champion outside the biggest gymnasium in Rome, where it stood until it was struck by lightning and reduced to a shapeless lump of bronze.

Today statues are reckoned to be even better than a commemorative character mug when it comes to saluting a legend. A statue of Fred Perry, the former Wimbledon champion, stands proudly outside the All England Club. In Helsinki, a bronze statue of Paavo Nurmi, the greatest Finnish runner of all, strides for ever outside the Olympic stadium.

In Newcastle upon Tyne, a statue of



Bird, the umpire, and the commemorative jug that holds him up as one of the great characters of cricket

Jackie Milburn, the football legend, has been a target for vandals, jokers and souvenir-hunters, who like to steal the ball. Graham Gooch, when he was England cricket captain back in 1992, unveiled a 10ft statue of himself in Chelmsford, Essex.

However, suggestions that there should be a statue of Paul Gascoigne in Trafalgar Square were firmly kicked into touch this summer because it was reckoned that nobody will remember him 50 years from now.

There is always the danger that the sporting memento may be reduced to the sad and cheap souvenir. These days you can buy a life-size cardboard cut-out of Stuart Pearce, the Notting-

ham Forest defender, for £19.99. Liverpool oven gloves will cost you £4.99, a bottle of Manchester United whisky £10.99 and a bar of Southampton soap 99p.

Honouring an umpire is, of course, unusual, though Bird is an unusual, even eccentric, character. Umpires are more often criticised or even abused.

There is a record of one umpire being ducked in a pond after giving an unsatisfactory decision in a game between Benenden and Penshurst in 1892. On another occasion, in 1977, three students at Karachi College were charged with killing an umpire during a friendly school match after he had refused to reverse a decision.

Though he had a colourful career,

Bird managed to avoid death threats and duckings and, after overseeing 66 Test matches, he was transformed from a cricket umpire to something of a lovable national treasure.

An emotional man, he has already been appointed MBE. He wept when he collected his medal from the palace. He has been honoured, too, with an appearance on *Desert Island Discs* and wept as he chose his records. His reaction to the creation of his character jug has not yet been recorded.

Bird is not alone in being immortalised by the makers of the character jug. He is joined by English cricket's greatest legend — the "W. G. Grace Character Jug", which boasts details including the famous MCC cap and "tinges of grey in the giant's beard".

There is, too, a "Johnners Character Jug", commemorating Brian Johnston, the immortal voice of cricket. The handle of this one is made up of a microphone, a cricket ball and a ball. These cricketing greats are complemented by a jug dedicated to Henry Cooper, the heavyweight boxer, on which the handle is fashioned from boxing gloves and a Lonsdale belt.

Collectors' items all, this is a select band, more exclusive than any team of sporting knights. For when it comes to honouring sportsmen, it is hard to beat the aristocracy of the "commemorative character jug".

JOHN BRYANT



A microphone is a reminder of the voice of cricket, Johnston



Cooper joined an exclusive club with this recreation in clay

Second venue needed for record entry

By COLIN MCQUILLAN

SUCH is the international enthusiasm for the Commercial Union British junior open championships, that the Squash Rackets Association (SRA) has been forced to move part of the action to a second venue in Sheffield from tomorrow.

With 433 players from 35 nations providing the event with a record entry, Hallamshire Squash Club, with new courts built last year with lottery funding, has been brought into action to augment the more established facilities at Abbeydale Park.

"With Scotland hosting its junior open on one side of Christmas and us long established as the first major squash event of each year, we are the focal point of world junior competition," Don Sanderson, of the SRA, said.

"There are world championships at under-19 level for boys and girls on alternate years, but this is the great world gathering for both sexes at under-19, under-16 and under-14 levels. This is where we see the first emer-

gence of the great world talents to come."

Certainly, the Drysdale Cup, that is offered by the RAC club as the trophy for the British open under-19 boys champion each year, carries an impressive list of international promise since C. J. Wilson, of Repton, first took it in 1926.

Ahmed Faizy, of Egypt, now the world junior champion, has returned to defend the under-19 title in Sheffield, with Amr Shabana, his younger compatriot, as No 2 seed and Karim El Mistekawi, yet another Egyptian, sharing No 3 seeding with John Russell, of Kent.

Lee Beachillo, the British junior champion, from Yorkshire, is just too old to qualify this year, but Russell gave both Faizy and El Mistekawi all sorts of problems in the world junior championships in Cairo last year.

Jonathan Kemp, of Shropshire, is the No 1 seed for the under-16 title, but will be threatened by a number of talented foreign players.

CRICKET

Newport on road to recovery

PHIL NEWPORT, the Worcestershire and former England seam bowler, is confident that he will be fit for the start of the 1997 season as he starts his rehabilitation after an operation to cure an Achilles tendon injury.

Newport, one of the key figures in the glory years of the Ian Botham era, missed two thirds of last season after being struck down with the Achilles trouble.

Newport, who has played in three Test matches, said: "Last season was frustrating and was the first long spell I have had out of action for seven years. When you've probably got three or four years left at the most in your career, the last thing you want is to be out of action."

"I had six weeks' recuperating after the operation but I have started doing work in the gymnasium, bike work, jogging and so on and am gradually easing back into things."

"The big test will come later this month when winter nets get underway and there is a big difference between doing gymnasium work and bowling flat out, but things are going well."

"I have to be careful not to overdo things too soon, but I would say I am hopeful of being fit and ready to start the new season in April."

GOLF: SCHOFIELD PAYS TRIBUTE TO WAY SPANIARDS ARE PREPARING FOR CLASH WITH AMERICANS

Patino dismisses 'unfair' Ryder Cup criticism

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

JAIME ORTIZ-PATINO, the president of Valderrama Golf Club, and Ken Schofield, the executive director of the PGA European Tour, yesterday responded angrily to recent criticisms of Spain, the host country for the 1997 Ryder Cup, the course at Valderrama over which the biennial competition against the United States will be played, and arrangements concerning the match to be played from September 26 to 28.

"The premise that Spain can't organise a raffle is ridiculous," Patino said, speaking from his home near Valderrama, ten miles east of Gibraltar. "There have been far too

many comments to that effect lately and now I've had enough. This really is a bit much. It is easy to criticise. We are doing our best under the circumstances. We have to pull together."

"Spain has made a wonderful contribution to golf in Europe and any suggestion that it is not capable of staging this event is absurd and insulting."

"It has been our objective from day one to run the best possible Ryder Cup and from the quality of the venue to the attention to detail that is being shown. Everything that needs to be done is being done."

The reference to Spain's organisational abilities was originally made by Tony

Jacklin, when he was the Ryder Cup captain of the Europe team in the mid-Eighties. The phrase has often been repeated, much to the chagrin of the Spaniards, and,



Patino: upset

when more criticisms were made in a recent issue of a weekly American golf magazine, it was sufficient to force Patino to respond.

"Do we have to keep reminding everybody that the World Cup soccer and Expo 92 were enormously successful and that the Barcelona Olympics were among the most successful Games held anywhere?" Patino asked. "No other country has hosted three such events in such a short timespan."

"Grandstand viewing will be provided for up to 11,000 spectators and, for the first time at a golf tournament, there will be three jumbo screens enabling spectators to follow the action as it unfolds elsewhere on the course."

"As to the criticism of a lack of hotel rooms within the immediate vicinity, let me point out that, at Oak Hill in 1995, people were staying in Buffalo, 1½ hours away, and, at Kiawah Island for the 1991 match, spectators had to come from Charleston, which was 1½ hours' drive."

"Why do people pick on Valderrama and say they expect to be able to stay in a five-star hotel within a few minutes' drive. They didn't complain in 1995 or 1991. Why start complaining now?"

Patino said that the stories of fake Ryder Cup tickets being already in circulation were untrue. The tickets have not yet been printed, he said.

ROWING: EVENT'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY OFFERS CHANCE TO DEVELOP QUALITY OF COMPETITION

Henley women's regatta seeks to attract sponsors

By MIKE ROSEWELL

A FEATURE of British rowing in the past ten years has been the growth of women's participation. The vast majority of the 250 rowing clubs now allow, but also into their boats, with many, such as Thames Rowing Club, more than doubling their regatta successes as a consequence.

Another feature of this decade has been the rise of Henley women's regatta, which celebrates its tenth

anniversary this year (June 21 and 22) and is mounting a serious push for sponsorship for the first time in its history. Since humble beginnings in 1988, the event has grown to become a highlight of the rowing calendar, attracting crews from the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe and South Africa.

Henley Royal Regatta — the other, longer established, mainly male, summer highlight on the Henley reach — has always resisted sponsorship, but Margaret Adams, the women's Hen-

ley chairman, sees sponsorship as the route to greater things. "We are at that stage of our development where we need external funding to enable us to widen the scope of our activities to offer competitors the best," she said.

The push for support for the tenth birthday of the women's Henley coincides with the year that women's rowing in this country celebrates its centenary, and the regatta organisers are planning several special events, including an international university challenge race, to celebrate both

anniversaries. The sponsorship campaign, mounted by Berrido and Company, aims to raise £30,000 a year for the next three years.

For the past eight years British rowing has effectively been led by a woman with DI Ellis being chairman of the powerful executive committee of the Amateur Rowing Association. Ellis said yesterday: "We must have world-class events to attract world-class competition. Investment in women's Henley will identify talented competitors for a golden millennium."

CYCLING

Boardman lists his new year priorities

By PETER BRYAN

THERE is good news for somebody among the world's top pursuers: Chris Boardman will not defend his 4,000 metres world title in Perth, Australia, in August. That was the first event to be scrubbed from his 1997 racing programme, which he has just agreed with Roger Legacy, his Gan team director.

Instead, Boardman will concentrate on road events and yesterday confirmed his three main targets: the Tour de France, his debut in the Tour of Spain, followed, ten days later, by the world time-trial championship, in San Sebastian in October.

Along the way there will be a demanding series of continental races, each planned to prepare Boardman, 28, from the Wirral, for his chosen targets.

Boardman, in optimistic mood, said: "It's been hard in recent weeks to get the motivation for the necessary four or even six hours daily training rides, so often on my own. Now, however, it's starting to build up."

Later this month Boardman plans to remedy the loneliness of the long-distance rider. He is drawing up a route for a seven-day mini tour of Great Britain training ride and will invite many of the country's top riders to join him on what

promise to be punishing sessions in the saddle.

For the unfit, however, there will be a following vehicle to ease the pain. "I need to have a week's hard fat-burning session before I start my programme in Europe," he said.

The lesson he learnt from last year — when he won an Olympic bronze medal in the time-trial and later silver in the world championship event against the clock — was that the Tour of Spain, now the last main tour of the season, could give him the edge to regain the world time-trial title that he first won in 1994.

Boardman starts his racing season later than usual and misses the Tour of the Mediterranean in February and expects to share leadership of his Gan team during his Tour de France build-up with Frederic Moncassin.

□ Snow and ice wreaked havoc with the traditional New Year's Day time-trial programme, including the cancellation of the Southborough and District ten-mile event at Bethersden, Kent.

The CC Cardiff 8.8 miles trial was the only event to be held — a light fall of snow, holding off until the last rider had finished. The winner, for the fourth year in succession, was Colin Wallace, of Hirwaun.

PINKERTON'S EYE



A monthly column from the security and detection agency

LOW RISK

SEVERAL carjackings have been reported near the Economic and Technical Development Zone at Dalian in Northeast China. Wedding parties held near the international airport in Kuwait have posed a danger to air traffic as revellers fire guns into the air. Several airlines have recently altered course to avoid random gunfire.

MODERATE RISK

A TOURIST convoy was fired on in Northern Kenya late last month by cattle rustlers who mistook their vehicles for those of security forces. One foreign tourist was killed.

HIGH RISK

ACCORDING to diplomatic sources a drug-resistant form of malaria has returned to eastern India, around Calcutta. Eastern Zaire could remain unstable for the near future as the Government prepares to launch a counter-attack against Tutsi rebels holding a 300-mile front. Tensions remain high in the West Bank city of Hebron in Palestine.

TENSION DATES

JANUARY 6 is the 34th anniversary of the founding of Colombia's National Liberation Army (ELN) a date normally commemorated by attacks. January 9 is the 33rd anniversary of "martyrs' day" in Panama when nationalists clashed with US forces. University students opposed to the possible maintaining of US bases in the country are likely to mark the occasion with protests which could turn violent. India's Republic Day on January 26 is traditionally accompanied by Kashmiri separatist violence. January 30 is the 64th anniversary of Hitler's assumption to Germany's chancellorship and neo-Nazis are likely to stage commemorative rallies.

Pinkerton 0181-424 8884

Summer holidays sell out

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

MANY of Britain's favourite foreign summer holiday resorts will be sold out within the next six weeks after a record-breaking post-Christmas bookings rush.

Travel agents say sales are up at least 25 per cent on the same time last year with more than two million people already reserving their favourite holiday.

Ian Smith, managing director of the biggest travel agency chain Luna Poly, said that summer holiday bookings to Minorca were up 59 per cent up on last year, the Algarve was up 57 per cent up and the Caribbean up 54 per cent.

"If the trend continues we will have sold out of all these destinations by the middle of March," he said.

The travel industry is notorious for "hyping" sales immediately after Christmas but this year their optimism is justified by the statistics. When the industry offered more holidays than people were prepared to buy, a growing number waited to the last moment - then snapped up cut-price holidays, which tour operators were forced to off-load almost at any price.

Last year, however, one million fewer holidays were offered for sale, pushing up prices by 18 per cent. Thousands of would-be holiday-makers, who had held back, were then told there was nothing available.

This year, despite increasing demand, the same number of holidays is being offered again, linked to big discounts for anyone prepared to book early. Now the industry is predicting that last-minute prices will rise by a further 15 per cent to reach an average of £325 per person - 30 per cent higher than two years ago.

By offering cut-price deals early, tour operators can keep control of the number of aircraft seats and hotel rooms they need to sell, and ensure that they are not forced into last-minute giveaways.

Going Places, the second biggest travel agency chain, say 900,000 fewer last-minute holidays will be available this year, thus prices are bound to be higher, boosting profits.

"For the first time in many years it will be cheaper to take advantage of early booking deals in January rather than waiting for last-minute bargains," said Peter Shanks, the commercial director of Going Places.

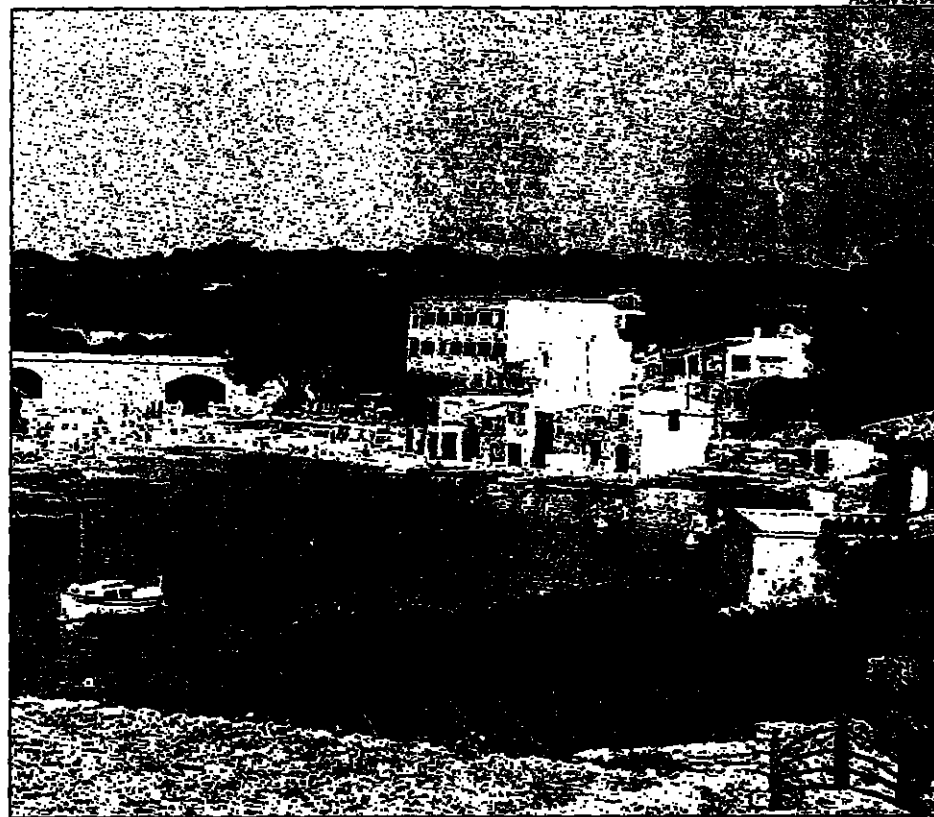
"The industry is committed to not increasing the number of holidays next year. Take a deal and book now or risk losing out altogether."

Malcolm Hewitt, president and group managing director of AT Mays travel agency chain, which like his rivals is offering savings of up to 25 per cent on holidays booked now, also said that the warnings of summer shortages were real.

"Bargain hunters got their fingers burnt last summer when they found that there was virtually nothing available in the peak season, even those holidays sold at the full price," he said. "The same will prevail in 1997 because tour operators have not increased capacity beyond last year's level of 8.6 million holidays."

Manny Fontela-Novoa, marketing director for Sunworld, said that sales were already up 31 per cent on last year.

The demand is so great for holidays throughout the year that both Thomson and ski specialist Inghams have launched a brochure for winter 1997/98.



Holiday bookings to the island of Minorca are 59 per cent higher than a year ago

British rediscover homeland

By TONY DAWE

THE number of holidays Britons take at home is expected to increase this year with a steady growth in self-catering and "soft adventure", which includes golf, cycling and walking.

Short breaks continue to boom with less fashionable cities promoting their theatres, festivals and museums to rival London, Edinburgh and York. Companies report a rising enthusiasm among

tourists for booking several of these breaks in a year.

"We're predicting an increase in domestic tourism of between 2 and 3 per cent on last year's figures," says Philippa Swain of the English Tourist Board.

The British Tourist Authority plans to build on the strong surge of interest in "soft adventure" by promoting pubs and B&Bs ideal for cycling holidays and detailing the 160 courses available for golfing holidays.

Peter Chappelow, managing director of Holiday Cottages, Britain's largest self-catering group, reports a significant increase in the number of young people looking for holiday homes.

"It seems to be a reaction against the package holidays that their parents take," he says. "More and more are wanting to discover their own homeland and are booking cottages in groups together to explore parts of Britain they do not know."

FROM yesterday British Airways has banned smoking on 1,100 of its flights each day, leaving just 80 where the habit is still tolerated. Only flights to Spain, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Philippines, Pakistan, Latin America, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan will retain smoking seats.

□ The intercity fares war was stepped up this week when the privately run Great North Eastern Railway introduced a £19 single fare from King's Cross to Glasgow or Edinburgh.

□ British travellers are more likely than any other nationality to shop for family and friends while abroad, according to American Express. The company claims that 34 per cent spend money on those left behind. The people least likely to spend money on others while abroad are the Mexicans. Only 11 per cent admit to buying for people at home.

Go skiing... or escape the cold

ONE WEEK's skiing in the French Alps from £99 per person, including return flights and self-catering accommodation, is available from Crystal Ski with departures this Saturday and next. Details: 0181-399 5144.

□ ESCAPE the cold with special deals to Malta from Co-op Travelcare. A three-week self-catering Cosmos holiday with a flight from Manchester on Saturday costs £199 and a six-week Airtours break from Stansted next Tuesday costs £239. Details: 0161-827 1030.

□ PARIS for a night via Eurostar is available from

£89 a person from Cresta Holidays until March 20. Book before January 31. Details: 0161-929 0000.

□ FOUR tickets for the price of three are on offer from Crusader Travel for a Nile cruise departing next Wednesday. The cost per person of £345 includes flights, full board on the MS *Elegant* and excursions. Details: 0181-744 0474.

□ KENYA for a week from £399 all inclusive at Shelly Beach, with flights from Heathrow on January 12 and 19, is on offer from Hayes & Jarvis. Details: 0181-222 7800.

BRITISH Airways' latest World Offer for sale until Wednesday includes Berlin for £109, Geneva £99, Madrid £99, New York £219, Los Angeles £319, Paris £81. Details 0345 222111.

□ VIRGIN Atlantic has Mega Savers priced at £459 for Johannesburg, £229 for Miami and Orlando; book by January 19. Details 01293 747747.

□ FLIGHTS with the Indonesian airline Garuda to Perth cost £758 return dur-

ing January. Details from Travel Mood 0171-258 0280.

□ MANX Airlines has an Apex fare between Cardiff and Jersey. The midweek price is £89 rising to £99 for travel at the weekends. Details 0345 256255.

□ KLM's "flying Dutchmen" can earn either double points or redeem two award tickets when flying from London to Amsterdam, Paris, Copenhagen or Milan before January 31. Details 0181-750 9000.

THE Pembroke Court Hotel in West London has a special weekend rate of £25 per room per night. Details: 0171-229 9977.

□ THE Mount Juliet Hotel in Ireland has a two-night break, from Elegant Resorts until March 27. The price of £515 per person includes flights, dinner on one night and a round of golf. Details: 01244 897777.

□ A DAILY gourmet dinner is included in the seven-night package, for about £691 per person from Leading Hotels of the World, at the five-star Grand Hotel Regina in Grindelwald, Switzerland, until March 31. Details: 0800 181123.

P&O FERRIES is offering discounts on any 1997 Dover-Calais crossing booked and paid for by February 28. A five-day return for a car and up to nine passengers will cost £50, a standard return £99. Details: 0990 980980.

□ HOVERSPEED has a five-day return available for £37 on its Dover-Calais route until March 31 for a car and up to five passengers. Details: 0181-524 4000.

□ SEA FRANCES is offering a special Apex fare for a five-day Dover-Calais return of £45 for a car and up to four passengers (additional passengers, £4). Details: 0990 711711.

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JUST AMERICA



FILM 1

The harrowing true story of pianist David Helfgott comes to the screen in the excellent new film *Shine*



FILM 2

Robert De Niro heads an all-star cast in *Sleepers*, a grandiose tale of teenage abuse and adult revenge

THE TIMES ARTS



FILM 3

The National Film Theatre celebrates Howard Hawks, director of the classic film noir *The Big Sleep*



TOMORROW

From David Bowie and Supertramp to U2 and Oasis: we look at the likely new pop sounds of 1997

For the new year, start at the top

CINEMA:

Australia's *Shine* is a tough act for 1997 to follow, says Geoff Brown

Examine the ingredients. Mental illness. Romantic piano music. The Holocaust's lingering shadow. There's material enough here for a glossy and famous Hollywood melodrama, the kind produced by Warner Bros in the 1940s when Bette Davis, Paul Henreid and Claude Rains laboured mightily with neuroses, musical kitsch and pretentious dialogue.

But *Shine* is something different. This excellent Australian film by Scott Hicks tells a true story, and tells it deftly. David Helfgott is a pianist driven towards a mental breakdown by a punishingly stern father and the demands of studying. We meet him first in the 1980s, a middle-aged motormouth shambling into a restaurant in the rain. Flashback to the 1950s, when his loving but authoritarian father, a concentration camp survivor, pushes his talent too hard.

Later, the teenaged David defies his father's wishes by accepting a scholarship from the Royal College of Music in London. Over-ambitious, he attempts Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto for a competition (Rach. Three, it's monumental) chimes his tutor Sir John Gielgud, for once enjoying a cameo part worthy of his talents. Breakdown, shock therapy and years in the wilderness follow. But the film is not called *Shine* for nothing. Love can redeem as well as main; and the optimistic ending is foreshadowed on the soundtrack, which contains five selections played by Helfgott himself, including the terrors of Rach. Three.

Bad performances and a solemn script could easily have scuppered this story. Right from the beginning, Hicks finds humour wherever he can, and the generally frantic behaviour of the future, chain-smoking Helfgott, brilliantly portrayed by the Australian stage actor Geoffrey Rush, colours our perception of the entire drama.

Darkest enters with Armin Mueller-Stahl's father, who cloaks his affection in stern edicts. But Hicks never sees him as an ogre; he is as much a victim of his past as Helfgott is of his own. Noah Taylor, as the teenaged hero (long hair, thick glasses, meals of cat food), beautifully suggests the brilliant student seizing up with nerves. And, when the story calls for maternal warmth and understanding, Google Withers and Lynn Redgrave arrive on cue as, respectively, Helfgott's mentor and saviour.

But no cast, however effective, could alone give *Shine* its extraordinary power. Much credit is due to Hicks himself. He juggles moods with skill and daring, finding the perfect expressive tools to convey Helfgott's agony. As he tears into Rachmaninov for his RCM competition, the sound becomes muffled, heads of sweat drop, the images slow down and spin around. Such powerful moments, and the uplifting experience of seeing a life saved from chaos, make *Shine* the first essential film of the new year.



Geoffrey Rush, brilliant as the mentally distraught pianist David Helfgott in *Shine*

Tenderness is not something you meet in *Sleepers*. This is a harsh tale of revenge, of abused teenagers at a reform school who meet their persecutor in adult life and take what they consider the necessary steps. Told simply, the morality of the story derived from Lorenzo Carcaterra's quasi-autobiographical novel would be disturbing enough. But the director Barry Levinson adopts a grandiose manner that pitches the unattractive tale somewhere between Greek tragedy and grand opera. This is a film you want to spit out of your mouth.

True, some surface trappings are alluring. The cast list glitters with the trendy and famous: Brad Pitt, Jason Patric, Kevin Bacon, Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman. None of them, however, can compete with the child actors who play the main characters, as teenagers, scuttling round the Hell's Kitchen neighbourhood of Manhattan in the mid-1960s under the watchful eye of a neighbourhood priest. (In former times he would be played, bawling, by Spencer Tracy; today he is played, boringly, by De Niro.)

You can be seduced, too, by the camerawork of Michael Ballhaus. The camera glides and sweeps; the boys' torments, metered out chiefly by Bacon's sadistic guard, are choreographed in fancy patterns of light and shade. But the more the film inches into its two-and-a-half-hour span, the more it drifts into meretricious display.

The first half is the stronger. Levinson may have lost the simple skills he showed 14 years ago in *Diner*, but he still has a knack for depicting male friendships, and establishing a time and place. The best sequence by far is a chase

Shine
Odeon Haymarket
12.105 mins
Uplifting marvel from Australia
Sleepers
Virgin Haymarket
15, 146 mins
Dog's dinner with a starry cast
Howard Hawks: American Master
National Film Theatre
Vintage Hollywood

through the bustling streets of Hell's Kitchen. The boys, vividly played by Joe Perrino, Brad Renfro, Geoff Wigdor and Jonathan Tucker, run off with a hot dog stand, the vendor in pursuit. The stand careens down subway station steps, almost killing someone. The charge is reckless endangerment: the punishment, a sentence at the Wilkinson Home for Boys, where the boys suffer abuse.

We jump 15 years: the film bloats, and then crumbles. It becomes hard to connect the adult characters with their younger selves. Two have become hardened criminals: another is an Assistant District Attorney and the fourth, the author's surrogate, a newspaper reporter. Bacon's guard is spotted and killed in a restaurant; justice, in their eyes, is finally done. The Assistant DA (Pitt) then masterminds a plan to engineer the murderers' acquittal. He himself will mount the prosecution, and also oversee the defence, nominally in the hands of Dustin Hoffman, a once-brilliant lawyer sabotaged by substance abuse.

For a mastermind, though, Pitt demonstrates remarkably

little presence; and Hoffman easily swamps the scenes with his mannered portrayal of a bedraggled man snatching a chance at redemption. The film becomes just a lazy cameo show, with a token woman, Minnie Driver, thrown haphazardly into the mix. When she meets Pitt, he dangles before her the terrible line "Why don't you give me a kiss to go with that hello?" I had thought that cliché of movie dialogue was dead and buried; but in *Sleepers* the cliché wakes up.

In better times, the National Film Theatre used to arrange retrospectives of veteran directors without any fanfare. Now, with Howard Hawks: American Artist, it becomes an expensive and rare event. A two-part season, with a Hollywood patron, the director John Carpenter. A documentary. New prints. Two books. Probably a T-shirt and a mug.

Behind the self-promoting ballyhoo, though, lie some excellent movies, directed by one of the few Hollywood figures whose films appear modern after 50 years. These are films with no fat, no excess sentiment, and their women never take things lying down. One obvious highlight is *The Big Sleep* (January 11 and 12): not the customary print, but a recently discovered copy prepared before the final release version. Lauren Bacall has less to do, Humphrey Bogart has more; and Raymond Chandler's plot, apparently, is easier to understand.

Hawks completists should not lose the chance to catch atypical early works like *Facil* (absurd sheikh stuff from 1928). Others should be satisfied by seminal 1930s films like *Scarface*, or *Twentieth Century*.

"REMARKABLE..."

Hopkins brings tremendous power to the role."

- Sheridan Morley, BBC RADIO 2

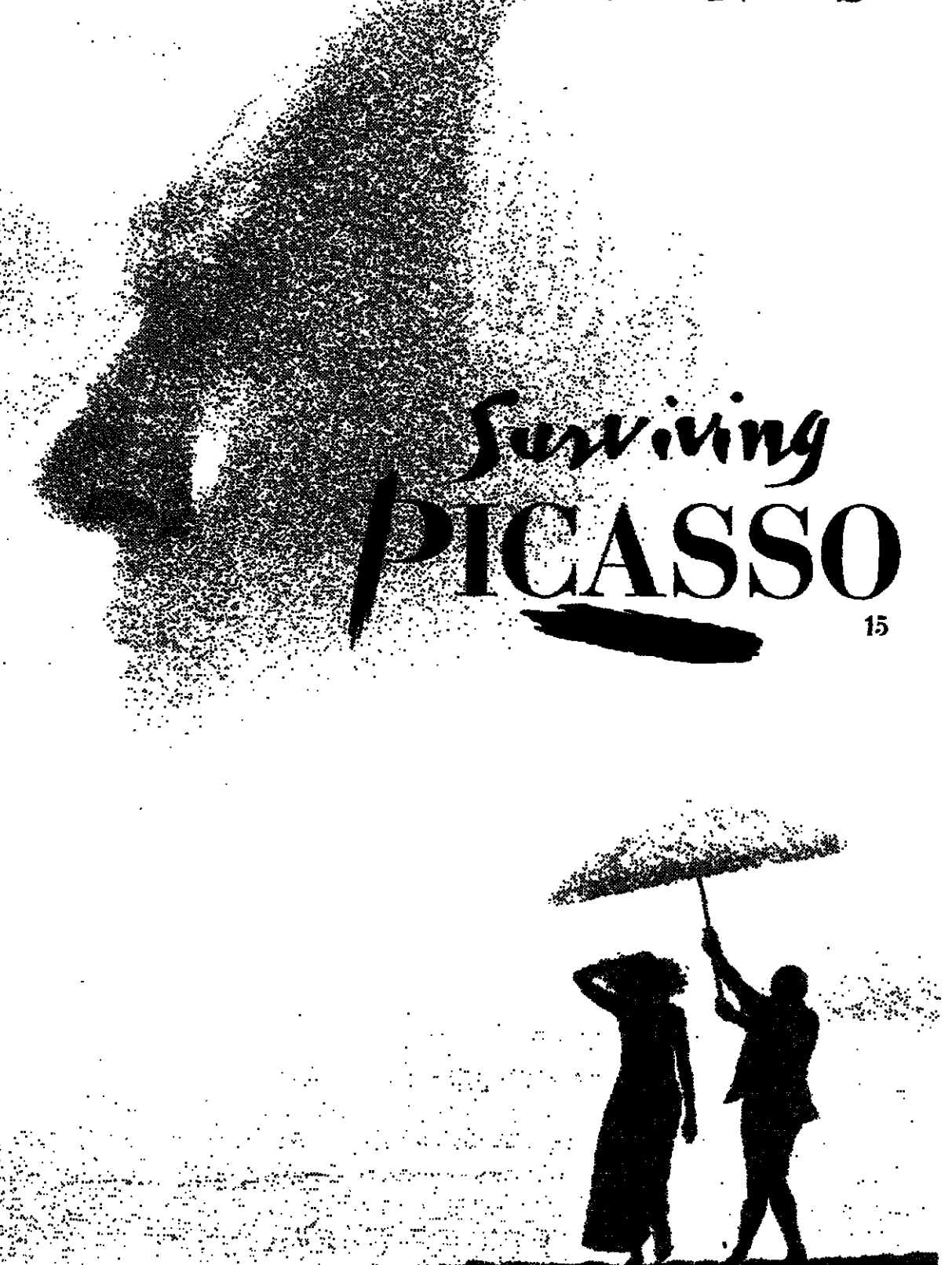
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Talking turkey

in which Jeremy Nicholas talked to Dame Antonia Sibley and raided her record collection. She was fascinatingly frank, especially about her early life and her absolute hatred of ballet lessons. Unfortunately for her, but fortunately for the rest of us, she had a greater ability at the thing she hated than in any of the fields she liked.

By the early evening of that day, television news bulletins had been cut in half. Radio 4,

however, maintained the excellent PM at one hour and the Six o' Clock News at half an hour without any signs of strain.

Perhaps radio would surrender come Christmas Day? Not a bit of it. There was the necessary religious content, of course, but those who look forward to, for example, *Composer of the Week* (Radio 3) on a Wednesday were not disappointed because of the special nature of that Wednesday:

day: the edition on Tchaikovsky provided a splendid insight into the composer's views on other composers.

I cite only a couple of examples to show that BBC radio is resisting the march of that nauseating trend, "seasonality", without ignoring the need for special references at what is a special time of the year for most people. I do think that there are too many repeats, especially on Christmas night, but I guess that is partial recognition that by then, the great god television has become irresistible.

PETER BARNARD

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THE TIMES ARTS

NEW VIDEOS

Sean Connery saves the day in the pummeling film about Alcatraz under siege, **The Rock**

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Placido Domingo is the king of Crete in a no-expenses-spared version of Mozart's **Idomeneo**

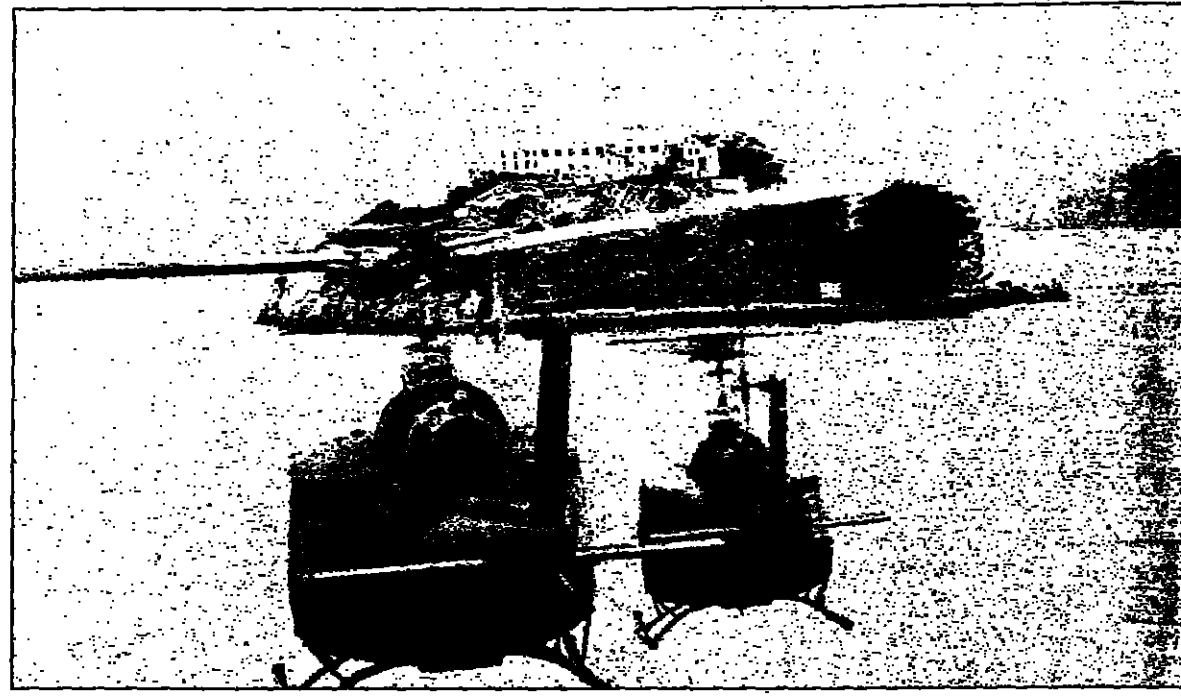
A Rock right between the eyes

NEW ON VIDEO

THE ROCK
Buena Vista, 15, 1996
ALCATRAZ is under siege from a Marine Corps rebel armed with poison gas. Can Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage save the day? A belligerent action movie from the masters of the genre, producers Jerry Bruckheimer and the late Don Simpson. Cage's biochemist adds a welcome light touch to a film that deliberately pummels the eyes. Available to rent.

GOGS
Warner, PG, 1993
IDIOT comedy meets prehistoric mania in this British claymation animation series produced for S4C in Wales, presented on BBC over Christmas, and now available as a video package. The humour is pretty basic - collisions with rocks, lots of lavalorian jokes - and the dialogue consists largely of grunts. Made with lots of spirit, but if you need finesse, look elsewhere.

HACKERS
MGM/UA, 12, 1995
COMPUTER hacking must have more dramatic possibilities than those offered by the tired story of renegade kids battling elders. But the film's frenzied surface may appeal. Images pulsate like an MTV video. Logging on becomes an acid trip. Jonny Lee Miller heads an unfamiliar cast dominated by Angelina Jolie: one glance from her and you know why her computer handle is Acid Burn. The film tries hard to be American, but it is British, made at Pinewood by *Backbeat* director Iain Softley. Available to rent.



Bird men of Alcatraz: *The Rock*, starring Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage, has thrills written all through it

HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR
BBC Video, U
THREE more precious episodes from the BBC series make their way onto video for the first time. *The Cruise*, from 1959, finds Hancock and Sid James far away from 23 Railway Cuttings. Cheam, getting into trouble on a Mediterranean cruise. In *The Babysitters*, from 1960, they enjoy the conveniences of a modern house while baby-sitting. In *The Tycoon* (1959),

Hancock dreams he owns half the world, but there is a catch: Sid James. Along the way, Hancock impersonates Churchill, the Lone Ranger, and Long John Silver.

THE LITTLE FOXES
Cinema Club, PG, 1991
SUPERLATIVE adaptation of Lillian Hellman's play about greed and duplicity in a financially depressed Southern family. Bette Davis rules the

roost as the grasping and venomous Regina. But all of the cast - many recreating their Broadway roles - give of their best, emblazoned in Gregg Toland's deep-focus photography and the meticulous direction of William Wyler. Other classics from producer Sam Goldwyn newly available on video include *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *The Westerner* and *Raffles*.

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VOCAL

SCHUBERT
Complete Songs Vol 2
Görne/Johnson
Hyperion CDJ 33027***
WHAT better way to start this year's Schubert bicentenary celebrations than with the latest volume in the series masterminded by Graham Johnson? The Hyperion Complete Schubert Edition is becoming a revelatory encyclopedia of Schubertian scholarship and performance, and Johnson has now caught up with the Schlegels, August and Friedrich, and the 'dawn of Romanticism' in the poetry of the brothers.

The young German baritone Matthias Görne is ideal to waft the warm breezes and watch the dewy nights. August von Schlegel's first ditty *In Fraise de Teas* epitomises the gentle melancholy of these songs, their melodies kept alive in the sentiment, high intelligence of Görne's voice.

He then turns to brother Friedrich and his *Abendröte* (Sunset) cycle; between them, Görne and Johnson make a persuasive case for these still undervalued songs.

Christine Schäfer, Görne's young soprano colleague, joins him for three of these songs, bringing artful simplicity to the flow of a river, a day in the life of a rose and the plaint of a forlorn maiden, before Görne ends with the familiar *Im Walde*.

OPERA

John Higgins

MOZART
Idomeneo
Murphy/Vaness/Bartoli/Domingo/Metropolitan Opera Orchestra/Levine
DG 447 737-2 CDJ***
A NO-EXPENSES-SPARED version of Mozart's opera seria. Bryn Terfel turns up as the Oracle and Frank Lopardo as High Priest of Neptune, roles usually assigned to any supporting singer at hand.

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Thomas Hampson is Arbace, confident of Idomeneo, who did not inspire Mozart's greatest music, although the American baritone comes close to persuading us to the contrary.

At the centre is Domingo as the king of Crete, as tormented as that other ruler of the eastern Med, Otello. There is much of the Moor in his Idomeneo, racked by anxiety as he prepares to sacrifice his son to repay vows made to Neptune. After one or two unsuitable roles on record recently, Domingo has found one worthy of the intensity and even ferocity he can bring to his singing.

As Idomeneo, Cecilia Bartoli matches Domingo for grandeur and nobility. She is regularly at her happiest in the 18th-century repertoire and her Idomeneo is no exception. Carol Vaness takes time

to warm up as Elettra and the voice is abrasive in *Idol mio*, but with her final aria of venom she is there with the best. That also cannot be said of Heidi Grant Murphy's Iphigeneia, a mouse among the titans. High-powered conducting in the old Karl Böhm style comes from Levine.

ORCHESTRA

Barry Millington

SAINT-SAËNS
Symphony No 3, Danse macabre, Phaeton, Danse macabre
Newman/Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra/Maazel
Sony SK 5379-4***
NOBODY could claim that Saint-Saëns' 'Organ Symphony' is adventurous repertoire, nor are the fillers especially original. But the playing of the Pittsburgh Symphony under its outgoing music director, Lorin Maazel, is sufficiently fresh and invigorating to disarm criticism. It is also impressively precise and

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

LONDON

BEEF, NO CHICKEN Derek Watcott's 1870s farce, set in Trinidad where a new railway line opens. Oyston/Hogan/Auto Repair and Authentic Film Shop. Yvonne Brewster directs for Tobacco Theatre Co. Tickets: 250 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (011-323 1000). Opens tonight, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat. today, Wed. Jan 22 and 29, 3pm, and Sat, 4pm. Until February 1.

I'LL BE YOUR DOG Three women and one male read are the characters in Roddy McDowall's first stage play, directed by the excellent Andrea Brooks. Transfer from a successful run at the White Bear. Old Red Lion, 418 St John Street, EC1 (011-357 7816). Preview tonight, 8pm. Opens tomorrow, 8pm. Then Tue-Sun, 8pm. Until January 25.

SALTIMBANCO Described as 'the greatest show on earth', Saltimbanco is a half-century of performance art, circus, and rock 'n' roll. Carque (a Saltimbanco) is a show on the theme of urban life, crowded with eccentrically clad characters in a performance that mixes the traditions of carnival with commedia dell'arte. Albert Hall, Kensington Gore SW7 (011-589 0212). Opens tonight, 8pm. 7.45pm. Then Tue-Sun, 7.45pm; mat. Sat and Sun, 2.30pm. Until Jan 19.

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN Touching and convincing adaptation of Mark Twain's masterpiece. Lovely pair of central performances, and good playing up and down the river. Greenwich, Coombe Hill, SE10 (0181-587 7759). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat. Sat, 2.30pm. Until January 25.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST The Christmas show at this theatre are among the very best in the country. Laurence Boswell directs this year's, with marvellous and automatic playing the Beast's palace. Young Vic, The Cut, SE1 (011-928 6285). Various times, 12.30pm, 1.30pm, 2.30pm, 7pm. Until February 1.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD Tremendous RSC cast, headed by Patsy Wilson, Alex Macdonald and David Thompson, in a production by Adrian Noble. Albany, St Martin's Lane, WCP (011-323 1730). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 3pm.

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAN Nicholas Hytner directs the second play by award-winning new author Martin McDonagh, set in the early 1920s on an island off the west coast of Ireland not chosen by Robert Flaherty for his film *Man of Aran*. National (Odeon), South Bank, SE1 (011-928 2252). Now previewing, 7.30pm; mat. Sat, 2.30pm. Opens Jan 7, 7pm. In rep.

NEW RELEASES

DAYLIGHT (12). Sylvester Stallone rescues a cross-section of humanity from a blazing New York tunnel. Amazing, old-style disaster movie. ABC: Baker Street (011-323 9772). Tottenham Court Road (011-323 6148). Empire (020-688 5950). Virgin: Chelsea (011-323 6148). Virgin: Chelsea (011-323 6148). Virgin: Chelsea (011-323 6148).

SURVIVING PICASSO (15). Anthony Hopkins, as Picasso, the war-torn artist, is an interesting film, but an unimpressive director. James Ivory. Miramax (011-323 6148). Odeon: Chelsea (011-323 6148). Odeon: Chelsea (011-323 6148). Odeon: Chelsea (011-323 6148).

THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES (12). Above Napoleon's film about Napoleon on an Italian farm set in countryside devastated by an earthquake. Rerelease (011-323 6148).

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TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Massey

ELSEWHERE

BRISTOL, The Last Year, Arthur Miller's intimate, moving play about four people struggling to make sense of modern-day America continues to draw audiences to the Vic's theatre. The Great American Dream. New Vic, King Street (011-387 7877). Tonight, 8pm. Then Mon-Fri, 7.30pm; Thurs-Sat, 8pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 2.30pm. Until January 18.

CARDIFF, Moscow City Ballet's latest production of *Chopiniana*, to the music of Chopin's piano sonatas. With the National Ballet Orchestra, St David's Hall, (01222 878444). Tonight, 7.30pm. Then Fri and Sat, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; Sun, 3pm. Until January 5.

LEEDS, Josephine Barstow sings the role of Elizabeth I, struggling to reconcile her public and private lives, in Opera North's *Gloriana*. Grand, Leeds. Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 3pm.

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

HOUSE OF COMMONS (PG). House of Commons, returns only. Some seats available. Seats at all prices.

MACBETH, Fascinating production by Tim Albery, with Roger Alton and Ed Brannan as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Theatr'ya, 100 Tottenham Court Road (011-323 6148). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Sat, 2.30pm. Until February 1.

MARRIED WITH A LITTLE, Clever comedy about a married couple, played by Patsy Wilson and Alex Macdonald. Albany, St Martin's Lane, WCP (011-323 1730). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 3pm.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, Jonathan Miller's 1930s update makes the best use of the unexpended directions. With Robert Sworn, Norman Rodway, Angela Thorne, Norman Rodway, Angela Thorne. Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (011-358 4404). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Sat, 3pm. Until February 1.

SCROOGE, Anthony Newley back on the West End stage singing the title role in the Leslie Brown musical. Desford, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (011-323 2252). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 3pm.

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, Jessica Lange makes her West End debut, recasting the loneliness of strangers and unrequited by Toby Stephens's Stanley, in Peter Hall's production of the Tennessee Williams classic. With Imogen Stubbs and Sandra Dickinson. Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (011-323 6000). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 3pm.

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? Drama Reg and David Suchet in Howard Davies's powerful Albus production of Albus's searing play. Aldey, Aldey, WCP (011-323 1730). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until March 22.

LONG RUNNERS
Cater: New London (011-408 0072). The Ideal Husband: Old Vic (011-323 7616). The Last Days of Pompeii: Palace (011-434 0909). The Merchant of Venice: Old Vic (011-323 7616). The Merchant of Venice: Old Vic (011-323 7616).

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VOCAL

SCHUBERT
Complete Songs Vol 2
Görne/Johnson
Hyperion CDJ 33027***
WHAT better way to start this year's Schubert bicentenary celebrations than with the latest volume in the series masterminded by Graham Johnson? The Hyperion Complete Schubert Edition is becoming a revelatory encyclopedia of Schubertian scholarship and performance, and Johnson has now caught up with the Schlegels, August and Friedrich, and the 'dawn of Romanticism' in the poetry of the brothers.

The young German baritone Matthias Görne is ideal to waft the warm breezes and watch the dewy nights. August von Schlegel's first ditty *In Fraise de Teas* epitomises the gentle melancholy of these songs, their melodies kept alive in the sentiment, high intelligence of Görne's voice.

He then turns to brother Friedrich and his *Abendröte* (Sunset) cycle; between them, Görne and Johnson make a persuasive case for these still undervalued songs.

Christine Schäfer, Görne's young soprano colleague, joins him for three of these songs, bringing artful simplicity to the flow of a river, a day in the life of a rose and the plaint of a forlorn maiden, before Görne ends with the familiar *Im Walde*.

OPERA

John Higgins

MOZART
Idomeneo
Murphy/Vaness/Bartoli/Domingo/Metropolitan Opera Orchestra/Levine
DG 447 737-2 CDJ***
A NO-EXPENSES-SPARED version of Mozart's opera seria. Bryn Terfel turns up as the Oracle and Frank Lopardo as High Priest of Neptune, roles usually assigned to any supporting singer at hand.

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ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL 011 980 4242
English National Opera
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Mon-Sat 12.30, 2.30, 4.30, 7.30
2.30pm, No parts Sun

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■ VISUAL ART

If you love paintings and the places where they hang, New York's Frick Collection is unmissable

■ CONCERT

Robert King and the King's Consort fill the Wigmore Hall with a feast of seasonal songs for New Year's Eve

THE TIMES ARTS

■ POP 1

Boyzone see 1996 to a close with a gig in Dublin that is almost more pantomime than pop concert

■ POP 2

... while a noisy crowd of 15,000 see in 1997 at an all-night rave at London's grand old Alexandra Palace

If These Walls Could Speak: Michael Henderson on the civilised delights of New York's Frick art collection

The best that money could buy

The greatest collection of paintings in the world adjoins Fifth Avenue, a few steps away from Madison Avenue at its most exclusive. It costs \$7 to go in, and there are never more than a hundred or so people there at any time. If you love paintings, and the places where they hang, it is not hard to make a case for the Frick Collection as the most glorious place on earth.

Note the word, collection: This is no common-or-garden gallery or museum, of which Manhattan has plenty. Ten blocks up the road there is the Metropolitan, which is too vast to absorb in a single visit, and further up "Museum Mile" is the Guggenheim, the only building in New York designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, who detested the city. In midtown, the Museum of Modern Art, which holds many of the best paintings of the century, and some of the very worst, is ever fashionable. They are all wonderful places, but if you want to enjoy an unrivalled range of masterpieces without disruption, the Frick is unsurpassable.

Of course, it all depends on your taste. There are people for whom the greatest works of Rembrandt, Titian and Goya mean nothing, just as there are those who speak lightly of the *Missa Solemnis*. Fine, let them wallow in the overwhelming talentlessness of Pollock at MOMA, or the latest international blockbuster at the Met. It leaves more room for those who value art as something more than a giddy spin on a trendy carousel.

Henry Clay Frick made his money in Pittsburgh steel 100 years ago and acquired his collection of paintings and decorative arts on several trips to Europe. It is pleasantly quirky, but nobody can say that he lacked discrimination. However ruthless these American parvenus were in business, their aesthetic judgment was a good deal better than the smarries in modern-day New York. You can imagine



Inside the Frick gallery: "The last thing Frick-lovers want is a troupe of backwoodsmen charging about the place as if it were one more location on the tourist trail"

what Frick would have thought about "contemporary" art and the like. He simply wanted the best that money could buy, and he had plenty of the thing to show for it.

Three features make the Frick unique: the quality of the collection, the harmonious way the works are arranged and the intimacy of the building, as though visitors are guests in somebody's house, which indeed they are. It has a human scale and proportion, reflected not only in the magnificent paintings but also the superb display of European sculpture, furniture and porcelain. Even if there was nothing to look at, the Frick's restraint and old-world civility would still make it a place worth visiting.

But, my word, there is something to look at. Almost every great artist has been represented here, very often by his finest work. There is a room devoted to Bosch, another to Pragonard, and two rooms of English paintings. Other works — a Manet here, a Corot there — hang in splendid isolation around a central courtyard, where weary souls can rest beside two small fountains.

Two rooms in particular stand out. The living hall holds only six portraits, but what portraits. Holbein's *St Thomas More* and Thomas Cromwell face a matching pair of Titians. *A Man in a Red Cap* and *Pietro Aretino*. Between them, *St Francis in the Desert* stares at El Greco's *St Jerome*. "That man is alive," I once heard an American lady say of Thomas More, and you may well think the Lord Chancellor still breathes. It seems the greatest picture in the world, until you reach the West Gallery, and see the picture that really is the best.

No matter how many times you come across Rembrandt's 1658 self-portrait, every encounter is fresh. Like all great works of art, nobody can ever "know" it completely. On one occasion I stood before this painting for 35 minutes, oblivious to everything and everybody else. It occupies the same emotional world of late Shakespeare and late Beethoven, the only ruins truly comparable with Rembrandt's, and it speaks of a knowledge gained at a cost too immense to contemplate. Everybody has their favourites in the Frick and I am not reluctant to divulge mine. They include Van Dyck's portrait of Frans Snyder, *The Comtesse d'Haussonville* by Ingres, Chardin's *Still Life with Plums*, Lawrence's *Lady Peel* and Vermeer's *Officer and Laughing Girl*. If I had to live with only one painting in the whole world it would be the Vermeer, which adorns a wall in the south hall almost casually, as though somebody had just stuck it there.

Off-the-beaten-track collections tend to be special places. Places such as the Dahlem Museum in Berlin, with its marvellous Dutch rooms, the Lenbachhaus in Munich, home to Kandinsky, or the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston attract the enthusiast who prefers to enjoy great works away from the crowds that clutter the more famous galleries. Horror stories abound of major exhibitions, particularly in America. Only in New York could you see the appalling ignorance that made the 1991 Matisse exhibition at MOMA such a trial. Carnegie Hall on a big night is much the same. People go there to swank.

To be even-handed, only in New York can you find a private collection such as the Frick. It is a national treasure that prefers to remain a neighbourhood jewel, and may it remain largely undiscovered. The last thing that Frick-lovers want is a troupe of backwoodsmen charging about the place as if it were one more location on the tourist trail.

Other than the National Gallery, I have spent more hours in the Frick Collection than in any other picture-house in the world, and I do not consider a single moment to have been wasted. Along with Lord's cricket ground, where I have spent a few hours more, the big house at 1 East 70th Street is my favourite place in the world.

NEW YEAR'S EVE POP: Raving the night away in London, screaming it down in Dublin

High on the hogmanay

TRADITIONALLY the busiest night of the year for dance music DJs, New Year's Eve finds the most in-demand jockeys quadrupling their fees and hiring helicopters to hop from one lucrative event to another. And since 15,000 people gladly paid close to £20 each for a ticket to Mount Universe on Tuesday night, it is easy to appreciate the hard economic logic behind such behaviour.

This mammoth all-night party was organised jointly by the seasoned rave promoters Universe and rock festival veterans the Mean Fiddler. Unsurprisingly, then, this was a smooth and precisely run affair, with vast lighting rigs and highly professional sound. There was even an indoor fairground in the Palace's Great Hall, while giant silver foil ornaments dangled from the vaulted ceilings of the West Hall.

Central to the event was the six-hour set by Sasha and John Digweed, currently Britain's hottest DJ team, who expertly carved swooping gradients and dramatic crescendos into what sounded like a seamless collage of galloping house beats.

Other highlights included the mashed-up techno brutality of Detroit's Jeff Mills and an impressive appearance by veteran Chicago house pioneer Marshall Jefferson. Although the dance music world is a notoriously fickle one which votes, quite literally, with its feet, Jefferson managed to hold the crowd's attention despite wearing a jump suit seemingly borrowed from an ancient *Star Trek* episode.

The only truly "live" act was Orbital, rounding off



More panto than pop: Boyzone's music is almost a sideshow to the dance and costumes

Famous five go strutting

AS THE show, and with it 1996, drew to a close, the children of screaming pre-pubescent and early teenage girls that was Dublin's RDS Main Hall sent out loud and clear the message that this was Boyzone's year.

Having originally been dismissed in some quarters as an inferior-brand Take That, the departure of Robbie Williams from that Manchester super-group and their subsequent split effectively meant that Boyzone woke up one morning to find themselves no longer on the coast tails of their teen-pop rivals, but actually wearing the emperor's clothes. In pop music, just as in comedy, timing is everything.

After an hour and a half spent with eyes glued to the almost slavishly rehearsed but no less compelling spectacle that is a Boyzone concert, it becomes clear that Ronan is not just the star of the show, but the only member of the five strutting their stuff on stage who exhibits genuine star quality. Always looking completely at ease with the

CONCERT: A fine performance of music for the season

Singing in the new at a spanking pace

WHAT better way to see the year out than in the company of Robert King and his consort in a programme of seasonal music at the Wigmore Hall?

Under the heading *Weihnachten in Leipzig* (Christmas in Leipzig) they presented music by three Kantors of the Thomasschule in that city, not excluding the greatest of them all.

Vocal music by Bach was juxtaposed with items by two of his predecessors in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau and Johann Schelle, and by the Sinfonia in C Minor (the only purely instrumental piece) of his pupil, Johann Ludwig Krebs.

The cantata was in a state of evolution in the second half of the 17th century, and the works by Schelle and Kuhnau demonstrated two of the types in evidence at the time. Schelle's *Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein*, based on the well-known Luther hymn *Vom Himmel hoch*, uses not a chorus but two sopranos and continuo. Wonderfully fresh in invention, it was brought alive by two highly characterised yet well-blended singers: Deborah York and Tessa Bonner.

Kuhnau's *O heilige Zeit*, though in the old-fashioned style of the sacred concerto, was the other great discovery of the evening: expressive harmonies, imaginative word-painting and a surprise ending to a quietly meditative exclamation of the much-repeated words of the title — "O holy time!". James Bowman and Deborah York both had fine solos here and tempi were judiciously chosen to heighten emotional effect.

King's judgment is not always faultless in this regard. Bach's *Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen* (the opening chorus of part 5 of the Christmas Oratorio) set off at such a spanking pace that its lovely modulations went for nothing.

King's Consort Wigmore Hall

The first chorale of Cantata BWV 40, *Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes*, was another movement taken too fast for its own good, losing its sense of penitential self-confidence in the rush.

Baroque horns, one does not expect them to get a couple of beats out and stay there (final aria of BWV 40). Otherwise the consort's playing was impeccable (excellent oboes) and the vocal contributions were all beyond reproach: Robin Blaze, Charles Daniels, Peter Harvey and Charles Fitt also distinguished themselves, and the eight singers combined in a flexible chorus, ending with the fourth cantata of the Christmas Oratorio.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Mozart
DON GIOVANNI
3rd January
"A rare treat"
Evening Post

Verdi
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The music is, of course, almost a sideshow to the synchronised dance routines, the costume changes, the moving stage props, the on-stage video close-ups and so on. At times, it seems more pantomime than pop concert. You're just got to laugh when a tot who must have been no older than seven passionately sings along to the line from *Father and Son*: "Look at me, I am old but I'm happy".

NICK KELLY

John Gribbin on the Astronomer Royal's exploration of the infinite

And this Universe is just right

If you are intrigued by the discoveries in astronomy that make headline news, but all you know about them is what you read in the newspapers, this is the ideal book in which to find out more, and set those stories in context. If you are a widely read astronomy groupie, you may find that much of what Sir Martin Rees has to tell covers familiar ground. But the personal perspective on current developments in cosmology from the Astronomer Royal is still well worth reading, since Rees has been in the vanguard of many of those developments that make headlines, and gives an insider's view of one of the most exciting areas of science today.

Rees is the most influential and highly regarded British astronomer of his generation, but one with a relatively low public profile. This book will do no harm to his reputation, but should make the world at large more aware of his abilities. He writes about the nature of the Universe we live in, its origins and fate, and the possibility that it is just one bubble in a sea of cosmic foam.

This is, surely, the ultimate development of the Copernican view of the cosmos. Copernicus showed us that the Earth is not the centre of the Universe, but a planet which, like the other planets, orbits around the Sun. Since then, we have learnt that the Sun is just an ordinary star, one of a hundred billion or so similar stars wheeling around in a disc-shaped system, the Milky Way Galaxy. In the present century, astronomers have discovered hundreds of millions of other galaxies, and although for a long time it was thought that our Milky Way was an unusually large specimen, the latest investigations (with which I have been involved) have shown that it is slightly smaller than average.

We live on an ordinary planet, orbiting an ordinary star, in an ordinary location in an ordinary galaxy. Now it seems that the totality of everything we can see, all those hundreds of millions of galaxies forming the visible Universe, may be one speck in an infinite array of universes.

In order to lead us up to this dramatic conclusion, Rees tells the story of the Big Bang model of the Universe, and the evidence (especially from the famous cosmic microwave background radiation) that our Universe really was born out of a

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

Our Universe and Others

By Martin Rees

Simon & Schuster, £16.99

ISBN 0 68416 82 2



The Hubble Telescope's view of the Eagle nebula

superdense, superhot fireball some 15 billion years ago. He explains the theory of black holes, discusses the dark matter which dominates our Universe and even digresses into a brief discussion of time travel. There are also tantalising tit-bits of information about the characters involved in the investigation of the Universe (often hidden away in footnotes) where Rees just barely allows us an insight into his feelings about the way science is done, and the way credit is (sometimes mistakenly) apportioned.

This is heady stuff by the standards of Rees's usual public utterances. Too often these days, a scientist who does anything mildly interesting rushes out a press release claiming to have achieved the ultimate breakthrough. Rees is different. Although happy to spend a large part of his professional life investigating the implications of way out ideas (he was, for example, the leading proponent of the idea that the distant, energetic objects

known as quasars are powered by black holes in their hearts, each with a mass as great as a hundred million stars like our Sun put together), trying to get an even mildly sensational comment from him to use in a news report about these ideas has been about as easy as persuading him to let you pull his teeth out. It seems that we owe his cautious step towards the sensational here to his editor at Simon & Schuster, Nick Webb, whom he thanks for urging "that I should speculate a bit, and include controversial topics." We are all indebted to Nick Webb for that advice.

The most fascinating example of where this kind of informed speculation can lead is the notion of anthropic cosmology, which considers the relationship between humankind and the Universe at large. The fact that the Universe is just right for us to live in may seem like a tautology — we have evolved to fit the Universe we live in. But the existence of our kind of universe depends on many subtle balances in the laws of physics, and it is possible to imagine universes in which those laws are different (so that, for example, stars run through their life cycles more quickly, so that there would not be time for life forms like us to evolve).

You would never guess from his discussion of anthropic reasoning, but Rees was, in fact, one of the pioneers of the modern version of this kind of speculation. His favoured explanation is that, rather than our Universe being "tailor made" for us, there is a vast array of different universes, and that inevitably life can only exist in a universe rather like the one we live in. "If you go to a clothes shop with a large stock," he points out, "it isn't surprising to find a suit that fits you."

And where are all these other universes? Would you believe, at the other end of all the black holes in our Universe?

Rees writes in a thoughtful, slightly old-fashioned style, the professor letting his hair down just a bit for a wider audience. I'd have liked to see him letting his hair down even more, and getting a bit more excited about these truly exciting ideas. But perhaps he feels that the excitement in the ideas speaks for itself, and that no embellishment is necessary. He writes clearly and accessibly, and anyone who starts his book will surely find their way to the end without getting lost.

grown-up son and daughter. Marian has already tried to pursue the identity of a naked man in a painting marked "For Marian", and to pin down memories of a stranger who rescued her when she was trapped by the sea. The obituary, however, takes Marian to St Ives, where Stella was once a member of the painting community of Nicholson and Hepworth, and so into a lifeboat tragedy based on real events in the life of the fishing community there.

MARIAN'S children are well observed: Alice is a musician with a rascally life, and Toby a City dealer suspected of insider trading. It is not through Alice and Toby, however, that the story achieves contemporary relevance. That lies in a felt tension between mother and daughter which remains vibrant. To this reader's relief, Stella is vindicated as a credible if minor artist and a good enough mother. And the despised paintings turn out to include two or three Alfred Wallises and a Nicholson.

Going to St Ives

Elaine Feinstein

THE SERPENTINE CAVE

By Jill Paton Walsh

Doubleday, £12.99

ISBN 0 385 40847 1

anything more than an eccentric indifference to "unwashed dishes lying on the trestle among the paints, clothes cast everywhere and hanging out

THIS is a compelling tale with an odd period quality, although it opens in the present on a dark morning in Addenbrook's hospital. There Marian's mother Stella has been brought after a stroke. Marian tries dutifully to make contact with her mother's speechless body, remembering as she does so the difficulties they had in communicating at the best of times. As the plot unravels, the reader enters the moral and physical landscape of Thirties Cornwall. All Stella's passionate life has gone into her painting, and she has never shown

Madonna as Eva Peron in Alan Parker's film of *Evita*; from *The Making of Evita* by Alan Parker, Bantam, £12.99

Cry instead for the fate of Argentina

Norman Thomas di Giovanni

EVA PERON

By Alicia Dujovne Ortiz

Warner Books, £6.99

ISBN 0 7315 946 6

SANTA EVITA

By Tomas Eloy Martinez

Doubleday, £15.99

ISBN 0 385 40875 7

the anointed pair's bankrupt cred. Instead, the journalist Alicia Dujovne Ortiz presents us with such insights as "Peronism (sic) is a hodge-podge that allows all sorts of interpretations." Worse are passages like the one that informs us that Evita's golden hair — dyed, of course — "would become the saintly halo that penetrated even the deepest realms of her own self-perception. In fact, she would so literally incarnate the role of the saint that her skin would seem to become not just flesh, but mortified flesh." We are told that Evita's "power would grow without being based on any actual accomplishments".

Now, some 40-odd years after her death come two intelligent Argentine writers, whom one hoped would have fallen over themselves to expose the cheap sentimentality and crude totalitarianism of

Are we supposed to admire something in the abysmal mediocrity of our River Plate Mrs Santa Claus, whose life work was to hand out the packets of sugar, false teeth, refrigerators, trousseaus and homes that are summarised as "the direct redistribution of riches"? To the detriment of legitimate feminist aims one detects a tawdry feminist subtext, the basis of which seems to be Evita's cleverness in comparison to her husband's ineffectiveness. Nor has this biography been well served by the translation. A couple of comic examples will suffice: ranchos are hovels, not ranches; and *perba* dried are the sun is not herbs but mate leaves.

Tomas Eloy Martinez's novel, which has literary pretensions (and the translation of which is also marred) is disturbing. The book contains many eloquent, dramatic and colourful sequences. They are rich in human character, good storytelling, and the haunting forlornness that is Argentina. But where is the book's moral centre? Why write a novel

based on a life that already exceeds a novel's believability unless it is to use factual truth to get at essential truth?

But the author plays Borges's game with shifting mirrors to such an extent that one is lost in postmodern mishmash in which the story told is heavily interlarded with the story of how the story was 'told': into being. The main story is that of the Beloved's elaborately embalmed corpse, which went missing for more than a decade, and the secret service colonel in charge of hiding and disposing of it.

Fine, except for the excessive authorial intrusion, which begins with a footnote to clarify that a quoted letter is real. The letter is perfectly authentic, fictional or actual, until one reads that note. The result is the creation of more mystery and speculation, when Argentine needs to be brought out of barbarism into the sunshine and light of civilisation.

What Evita begged for was not lawful rights but favours from the top. Evita never misappropriated funds, it is said, yet she left an estate worth millions. But worse than the theft of money, she stole people's minds. The regime's indoctrination of schoolchildren may have been its chief crime; such brainwashing has not only crippled generations of Argentines but has also prolonged the authoritarianism which has been the country's scourge since the first conquistador trod Argentine soil.

Varied views of life behind papal walls

Roger Boyes

HIS HOLINESS

John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time

By Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi

Doubleday, £20

ISBN 0 385 40538 3

INSIDE THE VATICAN

The Politics and Organisation of the Catholic Church

By Thomas J. Reese

Harvard University Press

£16.50

ISBN 0 674 93260 9

The bucking of Communist rule in the East followed a long period of internal decay; intrigues gnawed away at the foundations until, in 1989, only the facade remained. In the end it did not take much of an effort to topple the remaining edifice. There are a dozen explanations for this great act of destruction and the most accessible gives the honours to individuals: Mikhail Gorbachev, Helmut Kohl, Lech Walesa and Vladimir Lukin have all been credited with bringing the house down. As *His Holiness* shows, the search continues for the heroes of the 1989-90 Revolutions.

According to Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi, Pope John Paul and Ronald Reagan constructed a secret, holy alliance to smash communism. Hand in hand, the two leaders worked to keep Solidarity alive in martial-law Poland and steered the country to a point where the Communist Party had no option but to self-destruct. This is history as cartoon. Scores of Vatican sources, many of them sadly anonymous, self-serving American officials and Poles are squeezed for information and comment that is then crammed into a thesis worthy of a Marvel action comic. General Vernon Walters, Ronald Reagan's special envoy, is

shown with John Paul, passing spy satellite photographs across "the polished mahogany surface" of the Pope's desk. The pictures show the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk.

"What is this?" asked the vice of Christ. He pointed to the circle.

"Heavy equipment, Holy Father," military vehicles, personnel carriers, tanks for use by the Polish security forces.

"Other photographs are handed over. This is a fuel vehicle," Walters explained, "this is a silo, this is a pointed tractor cap that can plow its way through snow and ice —

used for military assault, not for agriculture."

Well, this is the Pope as we know and love him, a man famous for his fascination with missile silos. You begin to smell a rat when the authors stress the deep Roman Catholic roots of Reagan, Walters and CIA director William Casey. Bernstein and Politi are desperate to find common ground between their two heroes. Were they not both actors? And is not the Vatican a kind of superpower with command over hundreds of millions of Catholics, with its own government, intelligence service and political ambitions? "An ideal intelligence agency would be set up the way the Vatican is," security adviser Richard Allen tells Reagan. Here is the heart of the Bernstein and Politi fallacy. Every organisation in the world gathers intelligence but that does not define the organisation. The fact that the Vatican and the United States have spies, and that both Reagan and Washington were opposed to communism, does not make for an equivalence. The Vatican has no territory to defend, no geopolitical role, is not part of a strategic constellation, cannot threaten with force. It is not a partner with Washington. There was no "secret alliance," only secret communication.



A secret alliance? Pope John Paul II in the US, 1995

The Pope and Reagan were right as were the many small anti-Communist, Nationalist groups in the dissident movements of central and eastern Europe. The Pope made his contribution, stoking Polish confidence with his pilgrimage in 1979. The Americans also did their modest bit: some dollars flowed into the Solidarity underground and political pressure was applied to General Jaruzelski. Yet the case for a holy alliance remains unconvincing: it is simply not enough to state that the Vatican and Washington shared a common interest.

It is a pity that Thomas Reese's book, *Inside the Vatican*, was not available to the authors when they set about drawing a conspiratorial explanation for the defeat of communism. Reese has given a precise description of the Vatican as an organisation — or rather three interlocking organisations: one dealing with the spiritual administration of one billion Roman Catholics and 4,000 bishops; one running the Vatican state and one supporting the extensive foreign policy work of the Pope. In this book too the sources are mainly anonymous, though some are plainly American and influential with the lack of reform under this papacy.

But unlike the Bernstein and Politi volume, anonymity adds to its authority and interest. Reese is good on Vatican bureaucrats and good at the questions: His sources tinkle with gossip and loyal criticism of the papacy. Sometimes the proposals are a bit silly and sometimes Reese's voice wavers uncertainly ("How crazy does a pope have to be, to be incompetent to govern?"). But it is a thorough book — more instructive, less intuitive than the works of Vaticanology written by the late Peter Hebblethwaite — and it neatly demonstrates the structural problems of His Holiness. The Vatican is not a monolith; papal policy is full of subtlety, much of which seems to have escaped Bernstein and Politi.

There is no Deep Throat who can unlock the secrets of this complex spiritual and political organism. Perhaps the whole project was designed as a way of concealing how little the United States actually contributed to the destruction of communism. As I recall, Bernstein was better at disavowing presidents than polishing their busts. Perhaps he should return to these more familiar fields.

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Ian McIntyre assesses the lasting power and surprisingly diverse appeal of one of the 19th century's greatest playwrights



Disciplined: Henrik Ibsen in 1870

As a young man, Robert Ferguson was so hypnotised by the novels of Knut Hamsun that he enrolled for a degree course in Norwegian to learn to read them in the original. When he subsequently wrote the life of Norway's greatest novelist, he called it *Enigma*. The title would have served equally well for his new biography of that country's greatest playwright.

A generation has passed since Michael Meyer's life of Henrik Ibsen. New material uncovered since then includes a letter of Ibsen's admiring paternity of the illegitimate child he fathered at 18 and details of how narrowly he escaped forced labour for failing to contribute adequately to the boy's support. Ferguson has also seen the diary of Emilie Bardach, long believed lost but simply overlooked in a Parisian library.

The fiction with Bardach, daughter of a well-to-do Viennese family, was one of several relationships with young women in Ibsen's later years. ("My wild woodland bird" he wrote to another of them — Hildur Anderson, his muse for *The Master Builder*.) To Bardach he appears to have talked of divorcing his wife, and travelling the world with her, although he also admitted that he was studying her. "She never got her claws into me," he graciously told one of his German translators, "but I used her for my writing."

His parchment skin and his fierce badger eyes

HENRIK IBSEN
A New Biography
By Robert Ferguson
Richard Cohen Books, £25
ISBN 185066 078 9

These "little princesses" were an escape from the bleakness of his marriage. "They live in great comfort and elegance," wrote a visitor in 1893, "but in the most complete bourgeois silence. They are two lonely people, living absolutely in their own worlds." Isaac Bashevis Singer once said he sometimes dreamt of killing his wife but never of leaving her. Ferguson believes that captures Ibsen's feelings towards his Suzannah.

While acknowledging the value of Meyer's monumental study, Ferguson calls it "a biography of the spread of Ibsen's reputation". His own aim is both more modest and more precise, and was brought into focus by John Barton's production of *Peer Gynt* at the Oslo Anifestamen: "I remember walking away from the theatre and wondering why a man who could create a cosmic circus like that should choose to devote the rest of his life to writing a series of dark analyses of unhappiness."

discipline that was almost obsessive. When he returned home after 27 years of self-imposed exile in Italy and Germany he was almost as celebrated as his exact contemporary Tolstoy. An English visitor observed his ritual daily entrance to the Grand Hotel in Kristiania — the variable black overcoat and stove-pipe hat, the prized decorations pinned to his chest: "A forbidding, disgruntled, tight-lipped presence, starchy dignified, straight as a ramrod — a touch of grim dandyism about him, but with no touch of human kindness about his parchment skin or fierce badger eyes."

The later plays, deeply concerned with the subconscious, greatly interested Freud. He detected in *Rosmersholm* evidence that Rebecca West had had an incestuous relationship with her father. When the play had its London premiere in 1914, a reviewer in *The Gentlewoman* found little to praise: "These Ibsen creatures are vile, unlovable, morbid monsters, and it were well indeed for

society if all such went and drowned themselves at once."

Ibsen may have created the modern theatre, but half a century after his death his genius remained a matter of opinion. "Where do you get your taste in authors?" asks Tyrone derisively in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. "Voltaire, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ibsen! Atheists, fools, and madmen!"

Theatregoers nonetheless still flock to Ibsen's harrowing dramas, and not only in Oslo's National Theatre or on London's South Bank. *A Doll's House* no longer has great force in western society as an assault on the institution of marriage, but Ferguson, who has lived in Norway for the last 14 years, points out in an intriguing aside that it has assumed meaning for advocates of an Islamic reformation. It has twice in recent years been performed in the Norwegian capital by visiting and native Islamic theatre groups, and has also been adapted as an Iranian film. Ibsen, whose mordant but elusive humour does not always survive translation, might just have permitted himself the grim ghost of a smile.

Ian McIntyre's biography of Robert Ferguson, *Enigma*, is published this month by Flamingo, priced £8.99.

DAVID COHEN

Lost in the Love Hotel

Tobias Hill

FLIGHT PATHS OF THE EMPEROR
Steven Heighon
Grant, £8.99
ISBN 185207 001 6

Like a travel guide or a history text, this is a book that begins with a map and the map, like Heighon's prose, is fascinating. Sumiyoshi ward, Osaka, is where more than half the stories in the collection take place. Mapped out, the area's rootless cultural sprawl is laid bare, just like the modern Japan in the following stories — R marks the Sumiyoshi shrine, Q, the Love Hotel, M, the American Dream Café.

Rootlessness — the fear and freedom of it, the desire to take flight and the need for home — is what binds Heighon's stories together. There is the obsession with homelessness, of Emperor Chin Shi Huang Ti, entombed with his terracotta army, who conquered China "like a silkworm, devouring a mulberry leaf". There are the implications of the Japanese proverb, *A man away from home has no neighbours*, looked at in the disturbing light of Japanese atrocities in the Second World War, then again in relation to war-torn rooms in the privacy of a Love Hotel. Most of all, rootlessness is seen as a feature of modern life, the common denominator of life in the 20th century. "More than ever

you are haunted. You live in an age of airline passengers, scattered families, flight paths and far off destinations."

A writer of poetry and fiction, Steven Heighon has been anthologised, but never fully published in Britain. His prose is charged with strong emotions, but the care and pace of the writing give the emotion balance, making it subtle and intense, as in the sad comedies of a condemned sushi bar in *Five Paintings of a New Japan*, and the twisted of a half-Japanese girl for her father in *Apparition Play*.

"Home is if your mother lives, and where," Heighon writes in one of several stories about family life — the distances between mother and son, husband and wife. But for the most part *Flight Paths of the Emperor* is set in Japan itself, a society where the young are *Shin jin rui*, "Strange inscrutable crea-

tures" who recite 10th-century haiku but hardly talk about Hiroshima.

Heighon documents the generations of Japanese who have become alienated and are in flight from their own history. "A fabulous nightmare from which their parents shook themselves awake." Echoing through many of the Japanese stories is a haiku by Basho — "Ah, summer grass! All that remains! Of warrior's dreams." In Heighon's vivid, clear prose, the poetic image becomes a haunting motif for the postwar reconstruction of a culture broken almost beyond repair. "After the surrender... wildflowers bloomed on the ruins, rippled in the hot wind. There was nothing for the children to eat... I heard other things as well; how faceless Japan had been, how for a while it had been a different place... waiting for the first touch of a foreign hand. For a sea change, into something, rich and strange."

Tobias Hill's current collection of poems is *Midnight in the City of Clocks (OUP)*; his first volume of short stories, *Skin*, will be published by Faber in June.



Legacy of our men in Africa

Thomas Pakenham

WINDS OF CHANGE
By Trevor Royle
John Murray, £18.99
ISBN 0 7195 5352 0
A FIGHTING RETREAT
By Robin Neillands
Hodder & Stoughton, £25
ISBN 0 340 63520 7

At times Africa seems irredeemable. As Matthew Parris wrote in *The Times* in 1992, "There is no hope for Africa, no hope at all." In *Winds of Change*, a lively book on the decolonisation of Britain's African territories, Trevor Royle shows that he is not immune from such black thoughts. "The roll call of disaster is more or less complete," he writes in the introduction.

Fortunately this is a wild exaggeration, as he is the first to demonstrate. Despite civil wars, famines, plagues, misdeeds and mistakes of every kind, none of the 13 African territories which Britain decolonised between 1967 and 1980 are in a state of collapse at the time of writing — except for Sierra Leone, one of the smallest. Many have made such unexpected economic progress since the British withdrawal that, as Trevor Royle puts it, "the physical remains of the British Empire in Africa are barely discernible." And he means barely discernible under the high-rise buildings, not the high African grass.

So we can take some credit for the success of post-colonial Africa, as well as kicking ourselves for some of the mistakes. By comparison with Belgium, France and Portugal, Britain has much to celebrate. In the 1940s solid foundations for the future were laid by a small group of mandarins at the Colonial Office, led by Andrew Cohen, with the blessing of Antler's Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones.

Royle quotes tellingly from Cohen's report of the late 1940s: "The tasks of social and economic development have a special urgency, because we no longer have indefinite time in front of us."

It is easy to say with hindsight that Britain had left it all too late: freedom for India, promised in principle before the Second World War, was bound to have an intoxicating effect on Africa. The fact

remains that Britain was the first imperial power to see the writing on the wall, and so was able to win a breathing space to prepare its black subjects for independence, an opportunity not granted to other rulers in Africa.

In British Africa the transfer of power was peaceful and almost dignified. Off-the-peg constitutions were hastily brought out, dusted and sent off to Africa; parliaments were thrown up like theatre props (designed on the Westminster model down to the Speaker's

wig; down came the Union Jack and, up went the new black and gold and green (or whatever colours they had chosen) and a new nation was born.

Predictably, Britain's biggest error in constitutional design was in Nigeria, where a quarter of Africa's population were thrown together in a half-baked federation, weighted to favour the North. But even in Nigeria, tormented by civil war in the 1960s and looted by corrupt politicians ever since, the civil service, trained by the old rulers, has held firm and kept the nation on its feet. How the unfortunate citizens of Zaire must wish their nation had been equally well equipped at independence.

To enliven his story Royle uses a medium not available to an earlier generation of historians: transcriptions from the tape-recorded voices of some of the participants. (Strange to say, he fails to exploit that gold mine of

British colonial records, the tape-recordings at St Antony's, Oxford.) The book documents vividly the confused feelings of the British administrators at the handing over of their colonies: shock at the speed of events, sadness at leaving, pride in a job well done, misgivings for the future.

In *A Fighting Retreat: The British Empire 1947-1997*, Robin Neillands also draws heavily on tape-recordings to write about the colonial wars of this period — "small wars" as people called them, somewhat dismissively, during the 19th century. He covers not merely the Mau-Mau revolt in Kenya and the bush war in Rhodesia, but wars in other parts of the Commonwealth, and the very different kinds of campaign in Northern Ireland and the Falklands. Neillands has harvested a rich crop of new material, interviewing British soldiers of all ranks, and has edited it into a narrative which is vivid and illuminating — if hardly very edifying.



Empire and the Second World War: recruitment into the Royal West African Frontier Force

André Breton was the *maitre d'* at the great Surrealist party of the Twenties and Thirties. To this day, no-one quite knows what Surrealism was, but this collection of essays by Breton, first published in 1924 when he was 28, is a good starting-point for trying to find out.

The main essay, *The Disdainful Confession*, written in 1923, is a splendidly exuberant piece of youthful writing, full of bold repudiations of anything resembling reason or sense. "I do not see so-called logic as anything more than the shameful exercise of weakness," writes Breton. What he believes in, he says, is "never letting anything become dulled in me" — in "hurling myself out of the window every day, again and again." His hero in this essay is an elegant young man called Jacques Vaché, "a past master in the art of attaching very little importance to anything," who spent his time drifting around Paris bars, and in 1919 killed himself — according to Breton — as a good black joke.

This essay is one of the liveliest accounts of rebellious boish nihilism I have ever read. It is also a good account of Dadaism, insofar as that movement — invented by the maric Tristan Tzara at about this time — allowed itself to have any even marginally intelligible ideas. Breton became for the first few years of the 1920s an enthusiastic Dadaist, handing over to Tzara a literary magazine he had founded.

But where was he to go from there? The answer, which we get in the other main essay here, *The Mediums Enter*, was to abandon Dadaism and

Unconscious manifesto

invent Surrealism. Surrealism entailed the same repudiation of conscious thought as Dadaism had. But it found somewhere to go in order to keep alive its sense of wonder and excitement — and that was into the Unconscious.

Breton noticed that as he fell asleep, "phrases rich in images" came into his mind. So was born the idea of poetry as a kind of "magic dictation". That is perhaps as near as we can get to saying what Surrealism is — an involuntary exploration of the depths of the unconscious mind.

Breton, when he was on his honeymoon in Vienna, even went to see Freud to tell him about his idea, but Freud gave him short shrift, and Breton wrote a bad-tempered article about him, which is also included here. But after Breton produced his *Manifeste du surréalisme* in 1924, it caught on, and the notion was in vogue until the late Thirties.

Not that it ever produced much. Writers such as Louis Aragon, who started writing under the Surrealist banner, soon turned to communist politics. The one good poet who emerged from the movement in France, Paul Eluard, certainly had an instinct for stringing together evocative, broken lines about love and grief — the editor of the Pelade edition of Eluard's works describes his poems as like the "wings of a butterfly

the masterful selection and deployment of their imagery, not just from the fact that it has welled up from the unconscious.

In Britain, the movement had little serious influence, though in 1936, at the time of the International Surrealist Exhibition in London, Herbert Read produced an absurd book about it in which he praised the Surrealists as having "as pure a spirit as the Bolsheviks". Henry Moore is sometimes claimed as a Surrealist. And today, whenever he gets a chance to write about it, George Melly still tries to keep the old flame burning.

Chirico's paintings and Cocteau's films are the works that, to my mind, draw most successfully on dreamlike images, and both would have paid homage to Surrealism. But the power of their art comes from

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The Legal Aid Board is the largest purchaser of legal services in England and Wales. Over recent years we have initiated major changes in the delivery of a service which affects the lives of millions. At the same time we have made real progress in promoting Total Quality Management in all areas of our operation. As part of a major package of further reforms we are taking over legal aid means assessment from the Benefits Agency. This will result in a fully integrated service provided through our thirteen Area Offices and will represent a significant service improvement. You could be one of the two key individuals who will drive forward the change process.

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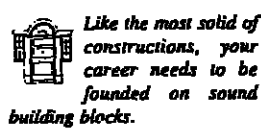
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Company liability for death

Regina v Gateway Foodmarkets Ltd

Before Lord Justice Evans, Mrs Justice Ewbank and Mr Justice Keene

[Judgment December 19] A company was liable under section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 where there was a failure to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of any employee, unless all reasonable precautions had been taken by the company or on its behalf. The breach of duty and liability did not depend upon any failure by the company itself, meaning head office personnel or senior management who embodied the company.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Gateway Foodmarkets Ltd against its conviction on a plea of guilty on September 18, 1995 in the Sheffield Crown Court (Judge Moore) to failing to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of an employee.

Section 2 of the 1974 Act provides: "(1) It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees."

Mr Ian Glen, QC and Mr Anthony Redford for the company; Mr Ian Groom for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS, giving the judgment of the court, said that the charge arose out of a fatal accident at the company's

Broomhill supermarket at Sheffield on April 2, 1993.

Mark Finn, aged 22, a section manager who on that day was duty manager in the absence of the regular store manager, fell to his death through a trap door in the floor of the lift control room.

For about 12 months there had been a persistent problem with the lift. A faulty electrical contact meant that it jammed frequently. An experienced firm of lift contractors was employed under contract with the company to provide regular maintenance and, also, a call out service.

Unfortunately, a different system had been developed at the store in response to the recurring defect. The contractors had told the store personnel how to cure the defect by freeing the contact manually and it became the regular practice for the store manager or another of the section managers to go to the control room and free the contact.

That was unauthorised by the head office. No one there was aware of it.

On the day before the accident the contractors carried out routine maintenance of the lift. For no good reason they left open the trap door in the control room floor. When the lift jammed on the following morning Mr Finn went to the control room, went from the sunshine into darkness, did not see that the trap door was open and fell to the floor of the lift shaft.

On September 18, 1995 Judge Moore was asked to give a

preliminary ruling as to the scope of the duty created by section 2(1) of the 1974 Act. He ruled that the offence under the section was one of strict liability, subject to the caveat of reasonable practicability, and that there would be a liability on the company under section 2 if there had been a breach of duty created by the servants of the company. Thereupon the company pleaded guilty.

The company's object in appealing was to clarify the law as to the scope of section 2(1), particularly in relation to companies whose businesses included a large number of local stores separate from their head office.

One question which arose was what effect the authorities on section 3(1) of the 1974 Act, including *R v Associated Ocel Cel Ltd* (The Times November 15, 1996) [1996] 1 WLR 543 had on the construction of section 2(1). Section 3(1) provided in different terms the circumstances in which an employer incurred criminal liability towards a person who was not his employee.

The general considerations referred to in the authorities, including the purpose and object of the legislation, made it overwhelmingly clear that section 2(1), like section 3(1), should be interpreted so as to impose liability on the employer whenever the relevant event occurred, namely in (a) a failure to ensure the health or safety of an employee, but only if "so far as is reasonably practicable" they had not been guarded against.

So the company was in breach of duty unless all reasonable precautions had been taken, which their Lordships interpreted as meaning "taken by the company or on its behalf". In other words, the breach of duty and liability under the section did not depend upon any failure by the company itself, meaning those persons who embodied the company, to take all reasonable precautions.

The qualification placed upon the company's duty of ensuring that all reasonable precautions were taken both by it and by its servants and agents on its behalf. The concept of the "directing mind" of the company had no application here.

What was said by Lord Hoffmann in *Associated Ocel Cel Ltd* suggested that the principles of vicarious liability did have some application, and that the statutory qualification applied when all reasonable precautions had been taken by the employer and those for whom he was responsible in law.

A failure at store management level was certainly attributable to the employer. Their Lordships upheld the ruling of the judge and since, on the undisputed facts, there was a failure at store management level, the offence was made out.

Solicitors: Andrew Gregg & Co, Sheffield; Mr Mark H. Webster, Sheffield.

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3 If so, did the defendant cause the works specified in each count to be executed?

4 If so, were such works executed in such a manner which affected the character of the building as a building of special architectural or historic interest?

5 If so, were such works authorised?

Counsel and the trial judge were all agreed that the offence in section 9 was one of strict liability, in accordance with *R v Wells Street Metropolitan Magistrate, Ex parte Westminster City Council* (1988) 1 WLR 1046.

The effect was that the intent, state of mind, motive or knowledge of a defendant were irrelevant to the issue of innocence or guilt since it was an offence of no mens rea; but they might be relevant to the appropriate penalty.

Any evidence produced by the prosecution was relevant if and to the extent it went to answer any one of the five questions. To adduce evidence which went beyond proof of elements to be established for an offence of strict liability was not an optional extra. Any evidence which did not go to answer any of those five questions was irrelevant and, therefore, inadmissible.

There were, however, cases in which evidence, although irrelevant and inadmissible, was not prejudicial to a defendant if it was neutral and did not threaten the safety of a conviction.

But where the evidence was irrelevant and inadmissible and prejudicial to a defendant, its admission would serve no purpose other than to inflame the jury to their prejudice.

There was at the end of the day one outstanding issue for the jury, which related to question 4. It was, in their Lordships' judgment, bound to sway the jury

Regina v Sandhu

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Sachs and Mr Justice Toulson

[Judgment December 10]

To adduce evidence which went beyond proof of elements necessary to be established for an offence of strict liability was not an optional extra for the prosecution, and to adduce inadmissible evidence which was prejudicial to the defendant had to be objectionable.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so stated when allowing an appeal by Major Sandhu (also known as Singh), an estate agent, against conviction at Snaresbrook Crown Court (Judge Stephen Waller and a jury) on six counts of conspiracy to commit an offence under section 9(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1967.

He was fined £3,500, with three months imprisonment in default of payment and ordered to pay prosecution costs totalling £17,500 after a trial lasting from February 5 to 15.

Section 9(1) of the 1967 Act provided that a person who contravened section 7 was guilty of an offence.

Section 7 provided: "...no person shall... cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised."

Mr Gregory P. Jones, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant; Mr Peter Gower for the Crown.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that Hainault Hall had been in poor condition since at least 1964 and no exterior decoration work was undertaken in 20 years.

By 1989 it was semi-derelict, open to the elements and prey to vandals. In 1990 it was placed on a register of buildings at risk and in 1991 the district council issued an urgent works notice to prevent further deterioration.

The appellant bought it in 1993 for his own use. It was uninhabitable, infested with wet and dry rot and in need of repair and restoration. He applied for planning permission and for listed building consent which was granted in September 1993.

The trial for contravening section 9(1) of the 1967 Act by unauthorised works on listed buildings involved five questions for answer by the court, whether justices or the Crown court:

1 Was the building a listed building?

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each of six counts, executed for its alteration?

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In all the circumstances their Lordships could not be confident that the jury might not have been swayed against the defendant by the admission of a lot of material which should not have been before them.

Their Lordships were bound, with considerable dismay in view of the time which the trial took and the expense involved to quash the six convictions.

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THE COURT OF APPEAL (Lord Justice Nourse and Sir John May) so held on November 7 when refusing an application by the defendants, Tracy Robinson and Michael Robinson, for leave to appeal against a possession order granted to the plaintiff mortgagee, Hypo-Mortgage Services Ltd, by Judge Vrijen in Milton Keynes County Court.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE said that it was axiomatic that minor children living in a property with their mother, the legal owner, were not in actual occupation within section 70(1)(g).

That seemed to have been assumed in *Bird v Syme-Thomson* [1979] 1 WLR 440, 444. They were there because their parent was there. They had no right of occupation of their own; they were only there as shadows of occupation of their parent.

No inquiry could be made of minor children or consent obtained from them in the manner contemplated by the provision, especially when they were, as here, of tender years. If the defendants were right lenders would never be protected; their security could always be frustrated by simple devices.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that extra credit for an early plea of guilty had not been given by the judge, who, according to counsel on appeal, had been unaware of the discussions at the plea and directions hearing.

His Lordship said that the possible prospect of a new count should not have prevented the appellant from pleading guilty. He would much better have pleaded guilty to the six counts at the plea and directions hearing, which was the purpose of such a hearing.

There was an element of unfairness in his having been induced to adopt a course which he was told would not prejudice him. In the event it had done so.

MR JUSTICE LAWS said that the regulation as amended was ultra vires. The legislation under which the regulation was made did not allow payments to be blocked while courts decided whether an award ought to be revised now or in the future. Where the executive had been allowed by the legislature to make law, it had to abide strictly by the terms of its delegated authority.

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Council should make inquiries first

Regina v Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council and Another, Ex parte Dunne and Another

Before Lord Justice Phillips and Mr Justice Hooper

[Judgment December 17]

A local authority should make inquiries into personal circumstances before and not after making an order directing travellers to leave land under section 77(1) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

A magistrate was restricted under section 77(1) of the Act to considering whether the formalities required under the Act had been carried out and it was no part of his function to review the merits of the local authority's decision to make an order.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in granting the application of John Dunne and Peter Rafferty for judicial review by way of certiorari to quash the decision of Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council to issue a notice on September 14, 1995 directing them, under section

77(1) of the Act, to leave land occupied by them and to quash a decision of Mr Christopher H. Johnston, an acting stipendiary magistrate at Wolverhampton, of March 19, 1996 to uphold the local authority's complaint made against them when they did not remove themselves from the land.

The magistrate had adjourned the hearing of the complaint laid by the local authority on September 22, December 10 and February 12, 1996 so that inquiries could be made into the circumstances of those against whom the direction had been made in order to act humanely and in accordance with local government duties as to homelessness, provision and education, as required by government policy.

In making his eventual decision of February 19, 1996 the magistrate considered whether the local authority had conformed to government policy by making sufficient inquiries into the applicants' circumstances and whether it was possible that the applicants' presence might lead to permanent settlement by travellers.

Mr David Secombe for the applicants; Mr Patrick Ground, QC and Miss Morag Ellis for the local authority.

LORD JUSTICE PHILLIPS, giving the judgment of the court, said that once the decision was taken to make use of the remedy, there should be no more delay between the giving and the enforcing of the direction than was reasonably necessary in the circumstances to enable those subject to it to comply with it voluntarily.

First to give a direction and then to consider the humanitarian implications before implementing it was not satisfactory.

Under section 77, a direction only remained fully effective for three months from the date when it was given, so that in the present case it would have been open to the applicants, after that period had passed, to have left the land on one day and re-entered it the next. That simply underlined the need for expedition.

In the present case, the magistrate considered it part of his

function, in effect, to conduct a judicial review of the council's decision.

In that he was mistaken. It was not for the magistrates to review the merits of the decision to give a direction that had been made by the local authority. The magistrates should simply be concerned with whether the formalities required by the Act had been carried out.

If those to whom a direction had been given wished to challenge it, their appropriate course was not to mount their challenge in the magistrates' court, unless the challenge was as to form, but to seek a stay and a speedy application for leave to seek judicial review of the direction.

The consideration given by the magistrate in the present case, both to the inquiries made by the council before giving the direction and thereafter, and to the possibility of the land becoming a permanent rather than a temporary site for travellers was inappropriate.

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By 1989 it was semi-derelict, open to the elements and prey to vandals. In 1990 it was placed on a register of buildings at risk and in 1991 the district council issued an urgent works notice to prevent further deterioration.

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MR

When holiday phobia should sound an alarm bell

Fraudsters come in all shapes and sizes and from all races and creeds. But one thing nearly all seem to have in common is an inexplicable aversion to taking a holiday.

From the collapse of Barings to fixing the books of the local darts club, any discovery of fraud is inevitably followed by attempts to piece together the behavioural defects of the culprit.

Peter Young, who had quoted investments from Morgan Grenfell, was said to return from shopping trips with 30 bottles of pickled cherries. Nick Leeson, who brought down Barings, lied to colleagues that he played in a semi-professional football team.

But in almost every case of fraud, one trait has become commonplace. As anyone who is serious about dipping their fingers into the corporate till

knows, the secret of success is never letting anyone get too close to your act. Missed holidays, therefore, are a small price to pay for security.

Toshitake Iguchi, the trader who concealed losses of \$1.1 billion from Daiwa, the Japanese bank, was renowned for taking only one or two days' holiday before rushing back to work. His actions were discovered only when US regulators demanded that the firm impose a mandatory two-week holiday on all staff.

Banks are beginning to use this pattern of holiday phobia in their attempts to combat fraud. Midland Bank now demands that its employees take off at least two consecutive weeks as part of its in-house policing.

A spokesman for the Midland said: "If there is anything going on, we may not

Successful fraudsters never let anyone get too close to their act, says Fraser Nelson

detect this in one week. But it would definitely be detected in two." Lloyds TSB has a similar system that it enforces for everyone from the chief executive to the cashiers, and UBS and BZW, the merchant banks, ask the same of anyone who handles money.

While the enforced leave is accepted without a grumble from staff who can envisage worse things than taking a couple of weeks in the sun, many banks find the suggestion an insult to their own internal checks and controls.

NatWest says that it relies on its in-house checking measures and not on

enforced holidays to examine its employees. A spokesman for Royal Bank of Scotland described the mandatory holiday idea as rubbish.

Merrill Lynch too was equally keen to underline that it had complete faith in its internal audit policy and had no need to impose a policy of mandatory holidays.

But no matter how strong internal compliance units are, there is a growing body of opinion arguing that there is no substitute for a solid two weeks out of the office.

Sir Andrew Large, chairman of the

Securities and Investments Board, argues that disasters happen when, as is often the case, fraudsters are allowed to slip away from the rules. He said: "The common thread running through many of the problems over the past few years is not that the regulatory rules were inadequate. It is that organisations' own knowledge and control of their business was shown to have been seriously lacking."

Companies are learning the hard way. Rolf Breuer, a member of Deutsche Bank's board overseeing asset management at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, admitted after the Peter Young fiasco that firms can become mesmerised by hard workers.

He said: "If you have a star performer in your business, you have a temptation and a tendency to let him go on, even if

he is not completely within his business limits." This is a trait fully recognised by insurers asked to underwrite firms against fraud.

Royal & Sun Alliance asks any company applying to be insured against fraud whether it forces its employees to take two weeks' block leave. It may still underwrite companies that do not, but will quote a premium reflecting extra risk.

While the insurers are paying attention to the holiday factor, City regulators and watchdogs have yet to accept the argument and offer no guidance on the matter at present.

From the Bank of England to the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation, they argue that devotion to work is not necessarily a bad thing.

Boeing prepares for big leap in production levels

By OLIVER AUGUST

BOEING, the world's largest maker of civilian aircraft, is preparing a two-and-a-half-fold increase in production volumes in some divisions following the merger last month with McDonnell Douglas, one of its competitors.

Boeing is able to step up production quickly through the integration of McDonnell Douglas engineers into its assembly lines. Before the merger, Boeing had been held back by a shortage of qualified manpower even though it had hired 20,000 extra workers in 1996. New

maximum staffing levels will be reached in the fourth quarter of 1997.

The aircraft manufacturer is to increase production of 737 jets to a four-year high of 21 aircraft a month from the current level of eight aircraft.

Orders for 737s reached 400 in 1996, making it the bestselling jetliner in the world. Total orders for 1996 stand at 645 aircraft, with a value of \$4.7 billion. This is the second-highest dollar value of orders in the company's history, having been exceeded only by the record year of 1990, when orders for 543 aircraft carried a value of \$4.7 billion.

Richard Albrecht, an executive vice-president, said 1996 had been positive not only for Boeing but for the industry as a whole. The economic recovery of airlines is thought to have resulted in greater demand for new aircraft, but the more modest pace of spending in past years.

The merger with McDonnell Douglas will have a significant impact on civilian aviation markets where Boeing is fighting Europe's Airbus consortium, in which British Aerospace has a 20 per cent stake. The move also helps Boeing's ambition to become a player in the defence sector.

McDonnell Douglas is involved in building most of America's military aircraft. The Pentagon has for the past

three years been encouraging American defence companies to consolidate.

Cl Shafer, the Belfast aircraft maker, has ended a disappointing year with the first new hirings since the disastrous collapse of Fokker, its Dutch partner.

Some 120 qualified engineers have joined the composite materials division following strong growth in the executive jet market. Shafer is building the horizontal stabiliser for the Bombardier Global Express, the spacious new nine-seater which features a separate bedroom and conference facilities.

Roy McNulty, the chairman, said: "The collapse of Fokker was a lesson to everyone in aerospace that a good product and a full order book is not enough. You have to be competitive."

"We have focused strongly on improving our competitiveness and reducing our costs. In addition, almost £700 million has been spent on a new plant and equipment, product development and training."

Factory space in Belfast lay idle for nine months and nearly 1,000 jobs were lost after Daimler-Benz cut Fokker's financial lifeline last March.

In 1997, Shafer could face intensified competition from the merged Boeing-McDonnell Douglas operation. But Mr McNulty played down the threat, saying the merger had improved the position of Shafer's parent company, Bombardier, is now the fourth-largest civilian aircraft maker after the demise of McDonnell Douglas, he said.



Mark Hope, corporate finance manager of Price Waterhouse, left, and Trevor Holden

Telecommunication deals help to beat 1995 levels

New record for US mergers

FROM REUTERS IN NEW YORK

US MERGERS and acquisitions hit a record high in 1996 despite earlier predictions that the pace of transactions would slow in 1996's second half.

Securities Data New York, New Jersey, which tracks merger activity, said \$658.6 billion worth of

transactions were announced in 1996, up from the \$519 billion seen in 1995, itself a record.

Another estimate, from Hoochman Lokey Howard & Zink, the investment bank, suggested a total of \$692.9 billion in 1996, up 37 per cent from 1995 levels.

The two firms use different methodology for compiling merger data. Securities Data figures include asset sales and the purchase of small equity stakes.

Mergerstat Review tracks transactions that involve US

companies and does not include the exchange of business assets or spin-offs.

Telecommunications companies rang up the year's biggest deals, including unions between British Telecommunications and MCI Communications, Bell Atlantic and Nynex, and SBC Communications and Pacific Telesis Group.

Utilities were another hot sector, but the pace of bank transactions slowed sharply from 1995.

Mergerstat Review found 94 transactions valued at \$1 billion or more, accounting

for 59 per cent of the overall merger market in 1996.

Mergerstat also said that US companies announced 5,859 transactions in 1996, up 67 per cent from 1995.

In the fourth quarter some \$20.7 billion worth of deals were announced, including Boeing's \$13.3 billion offer for McDonnell Douglas in the aircraft manufacturing sector, according to Securities Data.

In early 1996 many merger experts predicted the year's activity would hold below 1995 levels, but a strong stock market kept transactions at a strong pace.

Managers buy Dunlop unit

DUNLOP TEXTILES, a manufacturer of tyre cord, has been bought by its management from BTR, the industrial conglomerate, in a £7.1 million deal advised by Price Waterhouse Corporate Finance. The buyout team was led by Trevor Holden, the managing director, with equity provided by ECI Ventures and debt finance from the Bank of Scotland.

The company has two factories in Rochdale and Dunfermline, with a turnover of £12 million a year. Mr Holden said the buyout secured the future of all 170 employees.

PowerGen pulls out of waste burning project

By OUR CITY STAFF

ANTI-POLLUTION campaigners were celebrating yesterday after PowerGen announced that it was pulling out of a British scheme to build Europe's biggest waste incinerator.

The company has confirmed that it is no longer supporting plans to create a 1.2 million tonne incinerator beside the Thames. Now Cory Environmental, the other company involved, will try to find another partner.

Opponents were jubilant at the news. One said: "This is the beginning of the end for the scheme to build this massive incinerator here."

The campaigners claimed that PowerGen's decision was prompted by huge public opposition. More than 5,000 people sent protest letters to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Cory has been trying for six years to get permission to build a giant plant at Belvedere, near Bexley, to burn rubbish and generate electricity and has spent millions buying land.

The company's first application for a DTI licence for the

scheme failed in 1993. It has since made a fresh application, which still stands while the management talks to other possible partners.

Speculation has been rife for weeks that PowerGen's enthusiasm for the venture was fading. A spokesman said: "After a strategic review, PowerGen has decided not to pursue energy from waste schemes so that it can concentrate on other commercial opportunities in the United Kingdom and overseas."

John Manekery, spokesman for Bexley and Districts Against Incineration Risks, said: "This is the beginning of the end for the scheme to build this massive incinerator here. Cory now faces an almost impossible task to find another company to take PowerGen's place."

A spokesman for Cory said: "Cory Environmental is liaising with PowerGen about how the Thameside energy from waste power station application for consent can be progressed. PowerGen is committed to rendering assistance to our future partners in this respect."

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 27

COPINTANK

(b) A high-crowned hat of the form of a sugar-loaf. A word of obscure origin and history, appearing in diverse forms. Apparently the same word occurs in Shakespeare as *copintan*. Nothing similar is known in Dutch or Romance languages. Although Latin *capitaneus* chief in size and *capitum* a head-covering have been suggested as more or less plausible possible explanations of part of the word.

REMPLISSAGE

(e) Filling in needless filling in literature. From the French, of course. Not possible in such economical writing as journalism, but rampant in lesser forms, such as the novel (merely a story with remplissage), the television weather report (nothing but remplissage and persiflage, which is why it is immediately forgotten), and the bill from your solicitor.

CABALLINE

(b) Horseshoe. From the Latin *caballus*, perhaps from the rare Greek *kaballēs* a horse. Some propose for the Greek word a Balkan (Illyrian) origin. "Just turn your head to the right a smidgeon. Miss O'Connell, while I set the focus and shutter speed, I want to have the light falling on your half-profile. To bring out that—how shall I phrase it?—that caballine quality in your facial structure."

MOLIMINOUS

(c) Momentous, of great bulk, or importance, laborious in the execution and of great consequence when executed. From the Latin *mole* an object of great size and weight. As an adjective, it would be difficult to apply it to Word Watching. It is generally used about objects or enterprises. But it could be applied jocularly to your employer, mother-in-law, or bank manager.

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**GRAHAM
SEARJEANT**

As investors, academics and regulators have all discovered, it is impossible to fix a "reasonable" return in a competitive capital market for companies that need genuine risk capital. New structures cannot magically create consensus, let alone success. The real issue is how best to

FM 976-88-8 RADIO 2 FM 880

Question of taste

MORE eccentric ideas from the Asda bakery – the Babes and Hunk cakes. The brainwave of Allan Leighton, the supermarket chain's chief executive, these full-bodied novelty cakes are a feast for the eyes alone, priced at £7.99 each. The Hunk's sun-tanned muscular chest, made from a rich toffee icing, is filled with jam and cream. The curvy Babe cake (think Barbara Windsor) is more discretely covered in a scarlet basque or orange-flavoured icing.

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MORAG PERSTON



GUARDIANS 38

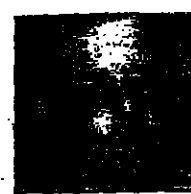
Graham Searjeant
on power in
the boardroom

BUSINESS

THURSDAY JANUARY 2 1997

FRAUD 37

How a holiday
might have
stopped Leeson



BUSINESS EDITOR LINDSAY COOK

Computer errors may cost Halifax members their bonus

By LERINSE SMITH
AND MARIANNE CURPHEY

SAVERS with the Halifax face losing share bonuses worth £1,000 on average when the society converts to a bank because of serious errors in its computer files. Within hours of the expiry of the new year deadline for members to top up their savings to qualify for a bonus, the Halifax has admitted that many savers have been sent the wrong information.

Errors include being told that they are ineligible for free shares, when they do qualify. The society has admitted that

there may be discrepancies in information sent to its 11 million customers, and urged savers to contact its helpline if they had any queries and to explain all relevant details about their accounts.

Extra staff and telephone lines have been put in place to cope with the anticipated demand from customers.

The Halifax said customers might receive wrong information on whether they would be eligible or ineligible for its free share offer because all information had been keyed in manually, and the spelling of similar surnames, such as Green and Greene, could also mean

customers inadvertently got wrong details about their share status.

The Halifax is unable to say what proportion of savers might be affected by computer errors. Members of the Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock building societies had to top up their account balances by the close of business on Tuesday in order to qualify for a shareout on conversion.

Details sent to one reader of *The Times* in north London, who asked not to be named, contained an error regarding her share status as executor to her late aunt's estate. The woman and her aunt had savings accounts with Halifax. They were

eligible for both the basic and variable distribution of free shares when Halifax converted. However, in a letter to the woman, Halifax said her late aunt's account was an ordinary share one, and did not acknowledge that the money had been transferred into an executor account. The letter said she was only entitled to receive one allocation of free shares.

The woman contacted Halifax several times over a number of weeks, but said the society was inconsistent that the information was correct. However, after contacting *The Times* about her predicament, the woman was then told an administrative

error had been made and she was entitled to two lots of free shares.

The distribution of free shares under the Halifax's proposed scheme will comprise a basic distribution to all qualifying members, employees and pensioners and a variable distribution to certain members, depending on account balances.

The basic distribution will be made to each investing member of the Halifax who held not less than £100 in total in share accounts and/or permanent interest bearing shares (PIBs) of the Halifax and/or the Leeds Permanent at midnight, November 25, 1994, and at the special general meeting in February, is at least £1,000.

investing member of the Halifax (or before the merger, of the Leeds) continuously until conversion. It is also made to investing members who are eligible to vote on the conversion resolution.

The variable distribution will be made to those who qualify for the basic distribution as investing members, and who held shares continuously for the period of two years ending on the qualifying day for conversion. It will also be made to those whose lower total balance in a share account and/or PIBs at midnight, November 25, 1994, and at the special general meeting in February, is at least £1,000.

Tax and rates 'likely to rise after election'

By PHILIP BASSETT AND JANET BUSH

TAXES and interest rates will have to rise in the early days of the new parliament, whichever party wins the election, according to the latest economic analysis by Cambridge Economists, the independent think-tank.

But, despite the prospect of having to make some unpopular and early political choices, Cambridge emphasised that the incoming Administration will take power at a more auspicious time than in either 1974 or 1979. It argues that there is little prospect of the type of speculative boom seen in the recent past and the pain of the associated fallout.

On taxes, Cambridge said that November's Budget had not fully addressed pressure on the Government's finan-

cial position. It said: "In order to reduce borrowing or finance spending or tax-cutting commitments, some tax increases are likely. Politically, the best time to introduce these is as early as possible after the election."

Cambridge noted that the optimum political timing for such moves coincided with the needs of the economy, which is likely to see growth accelerate this year to 3.3 per cent, supported by a resurgence in consumer spending and strong investment growth. A rise in interest rates would be needed if consumer spending accelerated more rapidly than the 4.1 per cent growth it is expecting and tax rises would also help to prevent excessive growth.

While the forecast does not predict who will win the election, much of the Cambridge analysis draws comparisons with occasions when Labour has taken over from a Conservative government.

It noted that on the two occasions in the past 40 years when this has been the case, the economy was passing a cyclical peak, whereas the next government will be taking office at the peak of the current cycle.

It also pointed out that, on both occasions in the past, the incoming Labour administration had been forced to deal with the aftermath of a pre-election boom, which then led to a slowdown in growth and an upturn in employment. This time around, there is not likely to be an excessive boom because of the more cautious policy of the current Government.

Cambridge pointed out that every Labour government since the war has faced an economic crisis related to sterling and the balance of payments but that this time "there is little prospect that a current account crisis will blow the next government off course."

The forecast said: "In many respects, the economic environment facing the next government is better than has commonly been the case in the past." It noted that there is a reasonably benign international economic environment featuring low worldwide inflation.

A separate report published today by Oxford Economic Forecasting, however, highlights some potential risks to the world economy this year, reserving particular gloom for continental European economies.

Oxford said that the outlook for Europe remains dominated by the massive fiscal retrenchment necessary for countries to meet the Maastricht treaty convergence criteria, which means that growth on the Continent will remain below trend in 1997. Oxford predicts growth of 1.4 per cent compared with 1.9 per cent in 1996.

Against this background, it argues that most countries — including Germany — will struggle to get their deficits down to the Maastricht limit of 3 per cent of gross domestic product without further public financing "fiddles". "Worries on this score are likely to provoke another round of interest rate cuts early in 1997 — still too little too late," it said.

Oxford concludes that the planned start of monetary union on January 1, 1999, is by no means a foregone conclusion.



Lord Rix, left, at Tesco's Brent Cross store with Ray Jackson, manager, and Paula Peters

Tesco funds for Mencap campaign

TESCO, Britain's largest supermarket group, will this month launch a campaign in support of Mencap, its choice for 1997 charity of the year (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Mencap, the charity for mentally handicapped children and adults and whose chairman is Lord Rix, has high hopes for the campaign. In previous years Tesco's staff have raised more than £1 million for the company's chosen charity.

Staff in more than 550 Tesco stores will this year focus their fund-raising on Mencap's Blue Sky Appeal, which will help teams to work with people with learning disabilities and their families. Tesco's charity trust will add 20 per cent to the amount raised. A joint Mencap-Tesco logo will feature on 1.4 billion carrier bags.

Business holds fire on single currency

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S business leaders are to hold back from taking a clear decision on the UK's participation in a European single currency until after a general election.

While the move puts the main business organisations in line with the major political parties, it is likely to draw criticism from some business leaders, particularly those in largely non-exporting firms, who are opposed to economic and monetary union (EMU).

Business leaders are deeply divided over the single currency issue, with most poll evidence showing that, in the main, they are unsure whether it will be of benefit to Britain.

While leaders of the Institute of Directors feel confident enough about their members' opposition to EMU to have

declared that Britain should not take part in a single currency, at least yet, other main business bodies are consulting their members on what line, if any, to recommend.

Leaders of key business representative bodies in Britain are now working on a timetable that will not see them make a recommendation on a single currency until after the general election.

The Confederation of British Industry is to mount an extensive consultation exercise, a process CBI officials believe will take three to four months. The CBI will then draw up a recommendation.

The British Chambers of Commerce is to mount a similar exercise and will join with the CBI to stage discussion forums on EMU.

US ruling offers hope for UK claims

By CARL MORTSHED

A LANDMARK ruling in the US Tax Court in Washington could open the door to billions of dollars in claims for overpaid tax from British banks and other companies with branch operations in the United States.

The case concerned a Canadian life insurance company which successfully argued that the Internal Revenue Service had violated the US-Canada income tax treaty when it used a complex formula to assess the company's tax instead of the business's actual income.

According to Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan, the Washington law firm that acted for North West Life Assurance, the ruling is likely to affect a similar case being brought by National Westminster Bank, which is claiming \$180 million in back taxes. It also has implications for any other foreign company that operates as a branch, rather than as a separate-incorporated subsidiary, in the United States.

A spokesman for the law firm said the two cases could end up in the US Supreme Court and had political implications: "The figures involved here are billions of dollars. This is an issue which will end up in the White House and in Downing Street."

The North West Life case centred around the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, which requires that a branch report as its investment income the greater of its actual investment income or an amount determined by reference to the average investment income of US life insurance companies.

The average is calculated using two-year old data, said the spokesman.

Mid-sized businesses regain confidence

By OUR ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN'S medium-sized businesses are expressing their most confidence since the last recession ended, but inflationary pressures, currently smouldering in the economy, are poised to take the shine off this optimism, a survey by Lloyd's Bank Commercial Service concludes.

The survey shows that many firms plan to increase investment and employment on the back of a recovery driven by strong domestic orders. But much of the confidence for strong profit growth is based on plans to raise prices.

Michael Riding, Lloyd's Bank's managing director of commercial banking, predicted that inflation and interest rates would rise in the first six months of this year and that this could dent confidence in the domestic market.

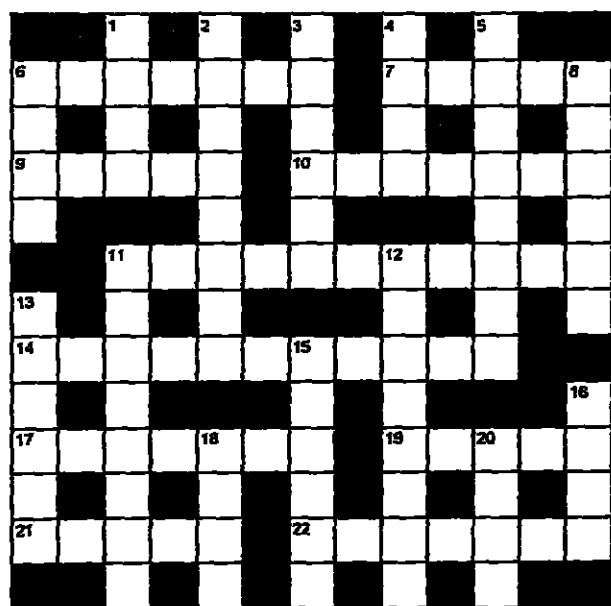
The survey, which analysed responses from 2,000 middle market businesses with turnovers of £1 million to £100 million, showed that profit growth accelerated strongly over the past six months in response to a significant upturn in business activity.

The upturn has been centred on service sector businesses, most notably transport and communications and hotels, catering and leisure. Manufacturing has performed much more weakly. The strongest growth came in the South of England, with the Midlands, the North and Wales lagging behind.

The survey said smaller businesses — those with turnover of less than £2 million — continued to have a harder time than larger companies which have seen the strongest growth in sales and orders.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 980 in association with
BRITISH MIDLAND



ACROSS

- 6 Easily damaged (7)
- 7 Vehicle immobiliser (5)
- 9 Franz — pianist/composer (5)
- 10 Glass-cased lamp (7)
- 11 Suck up (10) (5,6)
- 12 Poor reassurance (4,7)
- 17 Bear witness (7)
- 19 Cavalry sword (5)
- 21 Long (for) (5)
- 22 Dryness (7)

DOWN

- 1 "— teeth, — everything" (AYL) (4)
- 2 Of memorable importance (8)
- 3 Miscellany (6)

- 4 Check metre of line; medical image (4)
- 5 Shoeless; type of doctor (China) (8)
- 6 Occupy; pervade (4)
- 8 Poverty (6)
- 12 Dressed cabbage salad (8)
- 17 Of hearing; non-amplified (instrument) (8)
- 18 Absent-minded, disorganised (6)
- 19 Distress call (6); a holiday (3,3)
- 16 Sir Peter —, 17C Dutch portraitist (4)
- 18 Island off Mull, 13C abbey (4)
- 20 Radar image; minor out-of-line result (4)



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SOLUTION TO NO 979

ACROSS: 1 Left-handed 9 Amalgam 10 Rambo 11 Fate 12 Black Sea 14 Impair 15 Stroll 18 Butter up 20 Kilt 22 Romeo 23 Science 24 Dilettante
DOWN: 2 Edge 3 Tumble 4 Atrocity 5 Dumps 6 Drop a danger 7 Half-timbered 8 Laptop 13 Wiped out 16 Orcut 17 Russia 19 Tamil 21 Mist

Report hits at Rowntree inquiry

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE failure of young men in Britain to accept their responsibilities as husbands and fathers is a far more obvious explanation for rising levels of crime than unemployment and poverty, according to a report published by The Institute of Economic Affairs.

The report by Norman Dennis fires a broadside at what he calls Britain's social affairs intelligentsia — and in particular the influential *Inquiry into Income and Wealth* published in 1995 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The inquiry used income statistics from 1979 to 1992 to make an association between poverty and increasing inequality on the one hand and "drugs, crime, political extremism and social unrest" on

the other. Mr Dennis, guest fellow in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Newcastle, accuses the Rowntree inquiry of being selective in its use of statistics and of having failed to factor in moral and cultural issues.

Mr Dennis says serious social problems will not be solved by "the reckless repetition, by however many persons of eminence and goodwill, of the message that more money would make up the deficits in children's lives due to families without fatherhood, and that more money would restore civic safety by removing the frustrations of fathers without families".

Beyond moral arguments, Mr Dennis takes issue with much of empirical basis of the Rowntree inquiry's conclusions. He points out that the inquiry's own work shows that incomes were rising and

unemployment was low in the period from 1961 to 1979. If the association between poverty and crime were valid, crime should have been falling. He contends that crime was already rising rapidly. "The breakdown in social order was proceeding throughout the whole period 1961 to 1992 — not just the Thatcher era — so the Rowntree inquiry embodies at the heart of its analysis a massive contradiction."

The author argues that there may not even have been an increase in poverty since 1979. He points out that those in the lowest tenth of income distribution reported falls in their income of about 15 per cent between 1979 and 1992 but that their cash expenditure was 30 per cent higher. *The Invention of Permanent Poverty* (The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2 Lord North Street, London SW1P 3LB; £11).

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